



# NIGHTSHIFT

## Oxford's Music Magazine

**Free every  
month  
Issue 262  
May  
2017**

*"Nothing beats reggae in the sunshine,  
they were meant for each other."*

# ZATIA

**Oxford's reggae stars  
bring the summer.**

*Also in this issue:*

**Introducing LOW ISLAND  
COMMON PEOPLE** previewed

*plus*

All your Oxford music news, reviews  
and gig listings for May

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# THE BULLINGDON

## MAY 2017 GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Tuesday 2nd May</b><br><b>The Night Cafe</b><br>Doors: 7pm   | <b>Monday 15th May</b><br><b>Howie Payne</b><br>Doors: 7pm  | <b>Wednesday 7th June</b><br><b>Rhys Lewis</b><br>Doors: 7pm  | <b>Wednesday 5th July</b><br><b>Joyce Manor</b><br><b>Martha</b><br><b>Fancy Dress Party</b><br><b>Drama Kids</b><br>Doors: 7pm |
| <b>Wednesday 3rd May</b><br><b>Andrew Combs Band</b><br>Doors: 7pm  | <b>Thursday 16th May</b><br><b>The Coathangers</b><br>Doors: 7pm  | <b>Friday 9th June</b><br><b>Minus the Bear</b><br><b>Joan of Arc</b><br>Doors: 7pm                       | <b>Friday 11th July</b><br><b>Bloodstock:</b><br><b>Metal to the Masses</b><br>Doors: 7pm                                       |
| <b>Thursday 4th May</b><br><b>Troy Redfern Band</b><br>Doors: 7pm   | <b>Thursday 18th May</b><br><b>Ryley Walker</b><br>Doors: 7pm   | <b>Friday 9th June</b><br><b>Organised Fun:</b><br><b>Pender Street Steppers</b><br>Doors: 11pm           | <b>Wednesday 12th July</b><br><b>Billy Walton Band</b><br>Doors: 7pm  |
| <b>Friday 5th May</b><br><b>Groove:</b><br><b>Charlie Scott</b><br><b>Nique, G Whizz, Cizza P, Mac White</b><br><b>Only Child, Maximilian Carton</b><br>Doors: 11pm | <b>Friday 19th May</b><br><b>Smooove &amp; Turrell</b><br>Doors: 7pm  | <b>Monday 12th June</b><br><b>The Rainbreakers</b><br>Doors: 7pm  | <b>Friday 14th July</b><br><b>Nathassia</b><br><b>SAAL London</b><br><b>Original Primate</b><br>Doors: 7pm                      |
| <b>Saturday 6th May</b><br><b>Gunfingers</b><br><b>feat. Bassboy</b><br>Doors: 11pm   | <b>Sunday 21st May</b><br><b>Bloodstock:</b><br><b>Metal to the Masses</b><br><b>Twisted State of Mind</b><br><b>Cherokii</b><br><b>Crimson Tusk</b><br><b>Promethean Reign</b><br>Doors: 7pm | <b>Wednesday 14th June</b><br><b>Never Found</b><br><b>City of Ashes</b><br><b>Defences</b><br>Doors: 7pm | <b>Friday 21st July</b><br><b>Bossaphonik</b><br><b>Lakuta</b><br>Doors: 11pm   |
| <b>Sunday 7th May</b><br><b>Bloodstock:</b><br><b>Metal to the Masses</b><br><b>Bloodshot</b><br><b>Silk Road</b><br><b>1000 Chains</b><br>Doors: 7pm               | <b>Wednesday 24th May</b><br><b>Aoifa O'Donovan</b><br>Doors: 7pm   | <b>Friday 16th June</b><br><b>The Hummingbirds</b><br>Doors: 7pm  | <b>Tuesday 25th July</b><br><b>Sam Outlaw Band</b><br>Doors: 7pm  |
| <b>Thursday 11th May</b><br><b>Steve Rodgers</b><br><b>Lalma Bite</b><br>Doors: 7pm   | <b>Thursday 25th May</b><br><b>The Rifles (Unplugged)</b><br>Doors: 7pm   | <b>Saturday 17th June</b><br><b>Simple</b><br><b>Helena Hauff</b><br>Doors: 11pm                          | <b>Friday 25th August</b><br><b>P.Y.T</b><br>Doors: 11pm  |
| <b>Friday 12th May</b><br><b>Will Joseph Cook</b><br>Doors: 7pm   | <b>Friday 26th May</b><br><b>ZAIA</b><br>Doors: 11pm  | <b>Wednesday 21st June</b><br><b>Oxfordshire Science Festival</b><br>Doors: 7pm                           | <b>Tuesday 5th September</b><br><b>Rob Tognoni</b><br><b>Hell's Gazelles</b><br>Doors: 7pm                                      |
| <b>Friday 12th May</b><br><b>Indie Disco</b><br><b>feat. Will Joseph Cook</b><br>Doors: 11pm  | <b>Sunday 28th May</b><br><b>Simple</b><br><b>Peggy Gou</b><br>Doors: 11pm  | <b>Sunday 25th June</b><br><b>Bloodstock:</b><br><b>Metal to the Masses</b><br>Doors: 7pm                 | <b>Monday 18th September</b><br><b>Blues Caravan</b><br>Doors: 7pm  |
| <b>Saturday 13th May</b><br><b>Straight Outta Cowley</b><br>Doors: 11pm   | <b>Friday 2nd June</b><br><b>The Pretty Things</b><br>Doors: 7pm  | <b>Wednesday 28th June</b><br><b>Hitman Blues Band</b><br>Doors: 7pm                                      | <b>Friday 15th September</b><br><b>Bossaphonik</b><br><b>The Destroyers</b><br>Doors: 11pm                                      |
| <b>Sunday 14th May</b><br><b>Threepenny Bit</b><br><b>Xogara</b><br><b>The Rivers</b><br>Doors: 7pm   | <b>Sunday 4th June</b><br><b>Bloodstock:</b><br><b>Metal to the Masses</b><br>Doors: 7pm  | <b>Friday 30th June</b><br><b>Throwing Shapes #002</b><br>Doors: 11pm                                     | <b>Tuesday 24th October</b><br><b>Skinny Molly</b><br>Doors: 7pm  |



### THE BEST IN LIVE STAND-UP COMEDY

Saturday 6th May - 7pm  
**Adam Bloom, Javier Jarquin, Alistair Barrie, Inel Tomlinson**

Saturday 13th May - 7pm  
**Bethany Black, Andrew Stanley, Dan Thomas**

Saturday 20th May - 7pm  
**Kevin McCarthy, Eleanor Tiernan, Ben Norris, Dave Hill**

Saturday 27th May - 7pm  
**Ian Moore, David Trent**

**The Bullingdon**  
162 Cowley Road  
Oxford, OX4 1UE  
01865 244516

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# NEWS

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**Online: [nightshiftmag.co.uk](http://nightshiftmag.co.uk)**

**IRREGULAR FOLKS** Summer Session returns in July. The one-day celebration of music taking an unusual twist on folk music, takes place at **The Victoria Arms** in Old Marston on **Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July**. The event, sponsored by The Arts Council, will take place in a bedouin tent in the pub grounds and again be hosted by comedian Paul Foot. Last year's festival featured sets by Stealing Sheep, Bastardgeist, Jessica Slighter and Waitress For the Bees. Find out more at [www.irregularfolk.co.uk](http://www.irregularfolk.co.uk).

**WITTSTOCK** returns this month. The annual free festival took 2016 off but is back over the weekend of the 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> May, this time at Oxford Harlequins Rugby Club on Marston Ferry Road. The festival features two full days of local acts, with donations and a raffle set to raise money for the Headways and Rosy charities. Saturday runs from 1pm til 11pm and features sets from Penzo; Von Braun; OX4 Allstars; Beaverfuel; The Mark Bosley Band; Trevor Williams; The Shapes; Skeptica; Mad Larry and Order #227. Sunday runs from midday til 10pm and features Bright Works; Cosmosis; Jinj'oranj; The Phat Cardinals; John Poet; The Ponderosa; Freddy le Cragg; Otto; Mermaid Noises; Sam & Sarah Jane, and Country For Old Men. More info on the Wittstock 2017 Facebook page.

**ZURICH**, The Standard and HOO Has are the first names to be confirmed for this summer's **Riverside Festival** in Charlbury. Now in its 23<sup>rd</sup> year, Riverside runs over the weekend of the **29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> July** at **Mill Field**. Alongside live music from 40 different acts, this year's event will be themed around bees and the decline in the UK's bee population. Find out more at [riversidefestival.charlbury.com](http://riversidefestival.charlbury.com)

**TRUCK STORE** follows Record Store Day with another month of instore shows and signings throughout May. **Chasing Daylight** kick off a series of sets from local acts on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup>, launching

their new 'Live at the O2' EP. On the 11<sup>th</sup> **Little Brother Eli** preview their headline show at the O2 Academy on the 19<sup>th</sup>, while singer-songwriter **Natureboy** launches his new album instore on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup>. On Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> Australian singer **Emily Barker** will play a set of songs from her new album 'Sweet Kind of Blue', while on the 18<sup>th</sup> **Jon Spira** will be reading extracts from his new book about the rise and fall of video rental in the UK. Jon, who directed the Oxford music film, *Anyone Can Play Guitar*, previously ran Videosyncratic, which became Truck Store on Cowley Road. Timings and more info at [truckmusicstore.co.uk](http://truckmusicstore.co.uk).

**IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC** is looking for Oxfordshire acts to appear on a compilation album of local music later this year. The live music promotion, run by musician Mark 'Osprey' O'Brien, is inviting acts of any genre to submit up to three tracks at [thisisoxfordrecord@gmail.com](mailto:thisisoxfordrecord@gmail.com), with one track per act picked. Mark is also inviting acts to apply to play at the fifth Oxford City Music festival in November. Message him via the festival site on Facebook.

**THE OXFORD / UK MUSIC CENSUS** remains open until the end of May, with musicians and gig goers invited to contribute information and opinions towards what has been described as *Springwatch* for live music. Coordinated by researchers at universities in Newcastle, Edinburgh and Glasgow, the census hopes to measure live music's cultural and economic value, discover what challenges the industry is facing, and inform policy to help it flourish. The project is being run in partnership with the Musicians' Union, Music Venue Trust and UK Music, and is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Visit [www.uklivemusiccensus.org](http://www.uklivemusiccensus.org).

**AS EVER**, don't forget to tune into **BBC Oxford Introducing** every Saturday night between 8-9pm on



**RIDE** play their biggest hometown show in 25 years this summer. The reformed Oxford pop heroes will play at **The New Theatre** on **Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July**, a quarter of a century on from their sold-out show there in February 1992.

Tickets for the gig went on sale on the 21<sup>st</sup> April and are likely to have sold out within a few days. The gig is part of a UK tour to promote the band's new album, 'Weather Diaries', on Wichita on the 16<sup>th</sup> June. Produced by Erol Alkan it is Ride's first studio album since 1996's 'Tarantula', and their first Oxford show since they announced their comeback with a sold-out gig at the O2 Academy in April 2015. Ticket details at [www.atgtickets.com](http://www.atgtickets.com)

95.2fm. The dedicated local music show plays the best Oxford releases and demos as well as featuring interviews and sessions with local acts. The show is available to stream or download. as a podcast at [bbc.co.uk/oxford](http://bbc.co.uk/oxford).

**OXFORD GIGBOT** provides a regular local gig listing update on Twitter ([@oxgigbot](https://twitter.com/oxgigbot)), bringing you new gigs as soon as they go live. They also provide a free weekly listings email. Just contact [oxgigbot@datasalon.com](mailto:oxgigbot@datasalon.com) to join

on Thursday 1st June

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OXFORDSHIRE MERCURY PRIZE



# WIN CORNBURY TICKETS!

All good things must come to an end, but it's important to go out in style, right? And so it is, this summer will see the final **CORNURY FESTIVAL** after 14 years at the heart of Oxfordshire's music calendar. The festival has enjoyed and endured its ups and downs in that time, earning itself the nickname Poshstock for its regular roster of VIP guests, ranging from prime ministers to Hollywood film stars, but at its core is a dedication to live music that comes from founder and organiser Hugh Phillimore, which makes it a far superior event to the assorted celebrity chef fests and lifestyle extravaganzas that have sprung up like bitter fungi across the county in recent years.

A host of stars have graced Cornbury's stages since its inception, from Amy Winehouse, Bryan Ferry and Robert Plant, to Simple Minds, Bellowhead and Van Morrison, while this year's farewell will see headline sets from **BRYAN ADAMS**, **THE PRETENDERS** and **KAISER CHIEFS**.

In fact if there's an air of familiarity about much of the line-up it's down to Hugh wanting to bow out in the company of some of his favourite acts to grace Cornbury



over the years. Like Queen of Cornbury **IMELDA MAY**, who's played here more than anyone (there was even a tribute act to her last year when she couldn't make it), plus the inimitable **JOOLS HOLLAND AND HIS RHYTHM & BLUES ORCHESTRA**; **JACK SAVORETTI**; **WARD THOMAS**; **SOPHIE ELLIS BEXTOR**; **SCOUTING FOR GIRLS**; **NINE BELOW ZERO**; **POLICE DOG HOGAN** and **TOM CHAPLIN** from Keane.

Alongside these returnees will be the likes of **RIGHT SAID FRED**; **MIDGE URE**; **ST PAUL & THE BROKEN BONES**; **MAX JURY**; **BLACK DYLAN**; **TEX PISTOLS**

and **ROSE ELINOR DOUGALL**.

Plenty more besides on the two main stages, plus an assortment of local and national acts on the Riverside stage; comedy; the Disco Shed; a kids area and the campfire stage for some afterhours music and drinking.

Did we mention drinking yet?

Drinking. In a field. While listening to music. Seriously there is nothing on earth that is more fun than those three things combined. Not even jabbing Michael Gove repeatedly in the eye with a sharp stick. Although that would come a close second.

But yeah, music and drinking in a field. In the sun. Because this being

the last ever Cornbury Festival, rain has been banned.

Given the significance of the event, this year's Cornbury is set for a sell-out over the weekend of the **7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> July at Great Tew Country Park**. Tickets are on sale from [www.cornburyfestival.com](http://www.cornburyfestival.com) along with full line-up details, with VIP options, concessions and posh toilets available.

But thanks to our very good chums at Cornbury (and they have become good chums over the years), we've got two pairs of adult weekend camping tickets to give away. For free. In a competition. You too could be there to celebrate the fabulous finale.

To win, just tell us the name of one of last year's Cornbury Festival headline acts.

Email answers, clearly marked Cornbury Competition, to [editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk](mailto:editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk), or on a postcard to Cornbury Competition, **Nightshift Magazine, PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU**. Please include full name, email address and a daytime telephone number. Deadline for entries if the 26<sup>th</sup> May. The editor's decision is to be too sexy for his shirt.




# RIDE

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Oxford  
New Theatre

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# COMMON PEOPLE

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**SATURDAY**

**SEAN PAUL**  
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**WILD BEASTS / FOALS** (DJ SET)  
**THE SELECTER + THE BEAT**  
**AMY MACDONALD**  
**SAINT ETIENNE**  
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**ELLA FANTAZIA / TROL23 / DASHER + WAZZY / BUSTMASTA BARRYDARK**  
**DJ CIRCLES VS NELLY B PAGE / NICK MOORBATH / REGGAE BINGO / MICK SWAGGER**  
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& TICKETS**

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WITH ❤ FROM  
BESTIVAL



# A Quiet Word With ZAI A



“IT’S A LOGISTICAL nightmare. My hippocampus has tripled in size since this started.”

**DRUMMER AND VOCALIST**  
James Bolton is the man tasked with co-ordinating the nine-headed hydra that is Oxford’s leading reggae band, Zaia.

It’s a task that brings myriad logistical headaches when it comes to rehearsing, gigging and recording, but also one that brings great rewards as the band’s debut album, ‘Butterflies’, released this month, amply proves. At a time when reggae in Oxford, as far as live bands in concerned, is undergoing an uncharacteristically quiet period, Zaia are flying its flag high and proud. With a summer of outdoor shows ahead of them, including Carnival in July, and Common People this month, preceded by an album launch show at The Bullingdon, their reputation as one of the most uplifting, fun and unifying acts in town, is only set to increase.

**JAMES IS JOINED IN ZAIA’S** expansive line-up by lead singer Amy MacKown; bassist Dave Tomlinson; keyboard player Patrick Bolton; saxophonist Charlie Cruickshank; trumpeter Leo Petrokofsky; live FX, samples and DJ man Paul Williams, and guitarists Josh Hughes and Matt Cox.

In their teens James, Josh, Dave and Paul were formerly in local Arabic folk/dub band Raggasaurus who earned an enviable reputation for their pioneering fusion sound with Tunisian vocalist Khaled. “He was a classic Cowley Road character,” reflects James; “we were an instrumental band, then one night Khaled came up to us at a gig and said he wanted to sing for us in Arabic, and we thought, ‘why not?’ He’d been singing in various bands for thirty years and one day felt it was time to hang up the mic, so we formed Zaia from the ashes, recruited Paddy and started jamming”.

**THAT WAS BACK IN 2013.** Zaia began gigging as a purely instrumental band, occasionally utilising a guest vocalist, until they met Amy. “One of Amy’s friends knew Dave’s girlfriend Milly and kept telling Amy that she’d really get on with Dave as he loved reggae as well, explains James; “Then when they finally met Amy and Dave realised they knew each other from school. Eventually we all got together for a jam and her voice was just perfect for our sound, so we all decided to focus on working with her as our permanent singer.”

The Zaia we know now grew out of assorted departures and recruitments since, as James explains. “Kate [the

band’s original trumpeter] left in 2014 to go to Gamelan school in Indonesia. Fortunately we found the brilliant Leo, who was a friend of Paddy and James’s cousin, to replace her. In 2016 we changed the line-up again, adding Matt on another guitar and Charlie on the saxophone. Leo knew Matt from school and Charlie from Temple Funk Collective. They’ve taken our sound to another level. So we’ve evolved quite a bit since we began but now we all feel like we have the ultimate line up for what we want to achieve musically in the future.”

**ZAIA’S REPUTATION LOCALLY** has been made with regular appearances at Carnival (this year will be their third showing there), as well as gigs supporting the likes of Gentleman’s Dub Club (“They taught us about live energy, they’re masters of it,” says Paddy) and Jamaican dub legend Lee ‘Scratch’ Perry (“As crazy as his outfit and stage persona was, when I bumped into him back stage he was a very humble man, recalls Amy, fondly; “When I stumbled over my clumsy greeting, he took my hand, smiled at me and softly uttered ‘bless man’!”), while veteran British reggae champion David Rodigan – himself an Oxford boy – has played the band’s early tracks.

**AS YOU MIGHT IMAGINE** from a disparate array of musicians, getting a full album written, rehearsed and recorded has been a prolonged process, but it’s been well worth the wait; ‘Butterflies’ is a sweet, soulful burst of musical sunshine, nine songs of buoyant dub infused with an easy pop spirit and a folky edge that reminds us of Dreadzone at times, led by Amy’s warm, rich voice, which brings that hefty soul element to the party. *Nightshift’s* review of ‘Simple Song’, the lead track from the album, declared her to be the heart and soul of Zaia and her voice really is a stand-out element of the sound, a superbly fortuitous find for the band. “I’ve always been singing since I was a little girl, putting on performances with friends,” explains Amy, talking about her musical roots; “I think I formed my first girl band at 13. We actually played at the Zodiac! It was all through a youth summer project at Blackbird Leys Community Centre, which developed over the years to become what is now known as the CDI Project. I also studied a Diploma in Performing Arts (Song) at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts when I was 17, where I really came into my own as a vocalist. I sang a unique cover of Bob Marley’s ‘Three Little Birds’ and really found my own sound. “In my early 20s I guess I was also the muse of Soundworks Studio’s aspiring sound tech at the time. Alongside the late local legend David Norland (founder of Soundworks Studio and local reggae faves Mackating) it was my involvement with the studio which turned my head and interests to the local reggae scene.

“I didn’t need persuading to join Zaia, it was a natural progression; Dave asked me to join and I had heard wonderful stuff from Raggasaurus and knew it would be a great project. The love and vibes have blossomed ever since.”

**NOW NINE STRONG, IT WAS** the core seven of Zaia that put the album together, while the full nine will bring it to life on stages over the summer. Paddy: “In terms of writing, a lot of the material has been in the pipeline for years: ever since we started jamming together. We try all sorts of little hooks or ideas, and many have ended up manifesting themselves in

totally unexpected ways. The chief obstacle was balancing what each member wanted from the album.

Seven people meant seven different perspectives on creating music; that’s the beauty of this band but also the challenge. I’m really pleased with the finished album though, it represents the variety styles we can bring to the genre.”

James: “The actual recording process took about a year. It’s been long and laborious, that can’t be denied! Because there are so many of us, when we got the first mixes back it was really difficult to get any kind of consensus over how it should sound. We had some pretty bitter arguments over it. I don’t think it’s exaggerating to say that we came close to splitting up over this album, but in the long run it was definitely good to have these disagreements and get it out in the open. It also took a long time arranging all the additional recording sessions for brass and vocals. Paddy arranged most of these with Amy and Matt King, the producer. That was a slow and incremental process and at times it felt like the album would never be done. At the end though I really feel like we’re more cohesive than ever and I’m really pleased with how the songs have come out, so it was well worth all the effort and frustration. It’s always a learning curve making a recording, and this is the first time we’ve made a full length album, so stumbling blocks were inevitable. Hopefully now we’re more experienced the next one will be a smoother process, although I said that after we made our EP, and this has been much worse! And now there are nine of us! Seriously though, I’m incredibly excited about seeing what we can do for the next record now there are nine of us!”

**AS WELL AS A NEAR PERFECT** summer album, ‘Butterflies’ is an important local release right now. Oxford has a long and proud reggae tradition, going back to the original sound systems in the 60s but at the moment the band scene at least is pretty moribund; with longstanding scene godfathers Dubwiser more of an occasional concern these days and Mackating on indefinite hiatus following the death of Dave Norland in 2014, Zaia stand as almost sole keepers of the Oxford reggae flame. Amy: “The sad passing of David has certainly left a hole in the scene; he was truly the glue and inspiration for many local reggae acts, a lot of those bands having used his studio for its amazing analogue sound and David’s own incredible skills in reggae production and mastering.” James: “There are some signs of recovery. Tom Flint from The Dublings has just started a new project since that band went on hiatus. We’re happy to fly the flag for

Oxford reggae solo for a while until we see new bands get established.”

**ZAIA’S POSITION IS ALL THE** more unusual given the continued rude health of the local reggae club scene and the genre’s place as a unifying force on any scene, with its tentacles making themselves present in so many other musical fields. These days the likes of Count Skylarkin’ and Natty Mark – who helms the quarterly *Dub* zine, covering local rots an reggae, help keep the scene alive, with a ready and willing audience regularly queuing round the block for the Skylarkin Sound System night at the end of each month. How do Zaia themselves see the local scene that spawned them? Paul: “Reggae itself is so diverse you see it across every area of the

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**“Carnival has been massively important to our spiritual development. To play in the sunshine on the street you grew up on, and wrote your music on, to your home crowd. The best.”**

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city. The last Thursday of every month at the Zodiac years ago was Skylarkin and DJ Derek; that’s where we had our education in reggae: everyone went to that night, families were made there! These days Matt and Pringle of White Magic Sound are packing dancehalls; Robb from Free Range Roots is showcasing international sound system culture on a monthly basis and the Count has the best monthly party in town! The scene is alive and as exciting as ever.”

James: “Natty Mark gave us some of our first gigs when we started out in Raggasaurus. His enthusiasm for all things reggae and his willingness to give new reggae artists a chance means there’s always opportunity for new bands and acts to play to a audience and break into the scene.”

**ALL THAT SAID, ZAIA ARE** hardly a straight-up reggae band; in addition to the strong soul element in the sound, folk and pop get a good look in, while producer Matt King brings his own drum&bass roots to the mix.

James: “There’s definitely a strong soul element in the sound; that’s mainly down to Amy. We’re definitely not trying to replicate the Jamaican reggae sound. I absolutely love Jamaican reggae and it’s the central inspiration for our music but at the end of the day we’re not Jamaican. There just seem to be so many non-Jamaican acts just replicating the clichéd image and sound with their false patois etc. “I’ve always loved bands that

take inspiration from a genre but do something different with it, which is true to their own unique musical roots. I’m sure some people might listen to our music with a preconception of what reggae should sound like and be put off by what we’re doing, but equally I’ve had people come up to me after shows and say things like ‘I don’t normally like reggae, but I loved that’. So it cuts both ways.”

Paddy: “I definitely agree. Rather than a ‘reggae’ band, I think we could best be described as a band whose biggest influence is reggae. For me, the best thing about this band is how well it absorbs other styles. I like to think that this will help us build a really diverse following, not just traditional reggae fans. For me, it’s better to create your own product rather than replicate the Jamaican

sound, and many people have told me that’s why they love our music. In terms of other styles we best bring to the reggae party I’d say definitely folk; Dave originally wrote some of my favourite Zaia tunes on the harp. Sounds crazy but we think it works!” There’s a sense of exuberance that runs through the entire album; how important is it for you to bring everyone together and get everyone having a good time? Paddy: “It means everything to me that our music can do that.” James: “It’s really important to us. In my view the power of music to bring people together is its greatest asset.”

**BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER** is what Zaia will now aim to spend their summer doing. July sees them back at Carnival, possibly the band’s spiritual home.

Paddy: “It’s been massively important to our spiritual development as much as anything. To play outdoors in the sunshine on the very street you all grew up on, and wrote your music on, to your home crowd. The best.”

Amy: “I think Zaia would have evolved just as successfully without carnival, playing a variety of festivals and local clubs, though it is a favourite event of ours as it’s a great time of year for celebration of culture and music combined, and jamming and playing among our local peers is a great feeling. We have felt very humbled to have been invited to play as the penultimate act on one of the main stages three years running. It has a great vibe

and it’s a great sense of achievement being where we all grew up.” Paul: “One of my favourite ever gigs was playing as Raggasaurus at Carnival behind the old PMT site. We were playing 6-7pm – that’s how late carnival should go on until! We walked on and the heavens opened; all of a sudden umbrellas popped open and soon we were playing to 500 bouncing brollies! I will never forget that sight. We have played for the last three years at the Tesco Carpark and have watched that area grow; over the years we have tested songs on this stage and felt the love back. This year we are so excited to be launching the Carnival Live stage on Manzil Way; the whole area has been redesigned and we can’t wait to see everyone there.”

**BEFORE THAT THE BAND** headline the Uncommon stage at Common People in South Park at the end of May; what can newcomers expect from their set, who are the band most looking forward to seeing over the weekend and what do they think Common People brings to Oxford that other festivals don’t? Paddy: “Newcomers can expect to hear a unique mix of musical influences over a backdrop of bass heavy reggae. I’m really looking forward to Coldredlight on the main stage – massive congratulations to them. Another great example of a wonderful Oxford act sticking to their own unique sound. Common People is amazing because it has something for all Oxford music lovers: dance music, more internationally renowned acts, and a massive emphasis on local music. We absolutely loved it last year because you could tell the crowd were really listening to what you do as a band. We love that about Oxford. Plus, the setting!” James: “Yeah, really looking forward to Coldredlight; Alice in Chains are one of my favourite bands so any band that’s influenced by them gets my vote. Desert Storm are always great and I can’t deny I’m pretty keen for Sean Paul too.”

**AND BEFORE EVEN THAT,** **ZAIA** will officially launch ‘Butterflies’ with a headline show at The Bullingdon. Reggae is so often thought of as an outdoor, summer kind of music, but which do they prefer playing: sun-kissed festival stage or dark, sweaty basement bar? Amy: “Both are amazing and offer totally different experiences, but nothing beats reggae in the sunshine, they were meant for each other.”

***Zaia play The Bullingdon on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May, Common People on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> May and Carnival on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> July. Pre-order ‘Butterflies’ now at [www.zaiaand.com](http://www.zaiaand.com).***



# RELEASED

## THE AUGUST LIST Ramshackle Tabernacle

*(Self released)*  
There have been plenty of good albums to come from Oxford over the years, but the truly great records tend to come from bands who have completely mastered their sound and immersed themselves in the music that inspires them and that they themselves create. The last local band that absolutely nailed what they were about on record was Undersmile and their doom-laden classic ‘Anhedonia’, but with ‘Ramshackle Tabernacle’, The August List might just have made the most assured release to come from Oxford in some time.

Those familiar with band will be used to Martin and Kerraleigh Child performing affecting folk songs as a duo, but on ‘Ramshackle Tabernacle’ they’ve expanded their sound with the addition of Tommy Longfellow and Billy Quartermain from The Epstein. Kicking off with a retooling of the tale of Rip Van Winkle on ‘Old Rip’ this oddly muscular version of The August List possesses more bite than we’ve come to expect. Addressing existential dread while channelling Neil Young in “light miff” mode is no mean feat but they pull it off convincingly. Importantly, they’ve been careful not to fill out their sound too dramatically, so while this is an album made with a band, what really grabs the attention is the sheer space that is present in these songs. Even when the chanted chorus refrain of ‘The Ballad Of James Lucas & Betty Dupree’ kicks in, there is room for the song to breathe and for the band to establish an atmosphere that sounds as if a bunch of ghosts are having a knees up in the last chance saloon. The addition of Ben Heaney’s violin on ‘Where Has All The Fire Gone’ and ‘Half Light’ takes the band away from considered bombast and with his utilisation of Cale-ish drones and discordance he moves them into haunted, soulful territory.

With the themes of loneliness, rejection of the world and also the need to communicate being at the heart of the album, these shifts in style fit with the sense of cognitive dissonance that runs throughout. ‘Connie Converse’ might rattle along

## ADAM FRANKLIN ‘Iron Horse/Born To Lose

*(Club AC30)*

Swervedriver frontman Adam Franklin’s Record Store Day release is a cover of Motorhead’s ‘Iron Horse/Born To Lose’, one of the earliest and more understated songs in Lemmy’s vast rock arsenal (though check out his beautiful, moving ode to the fallen of WWI, ‘1916’, which will make you see the legendary hellraiser in a whole new light). On the face of it an unusual choice, but it proves inspired as Adam takes the song down several notches more, bringing an almost folkly psychedelic haze down to bear on the song, his voice fractured and fuzzy, the instrumentation like the buzz and clicks of insects, a sombre reflective remodelling of the original blues



with almost hoe-down vigour, but it also conveys the true story of a burnt-out singer-songwriter who disappeared from her home and family, leaving them and a body of work behind. This need to be alone and let be is countered by the expansive and quite gorgeous denouement to ‘Wilderness’ that finds the pair singing “I’d cross any frontier that led to you...I found a tenderness in this wilderness”. It is of course the vocal interplay between Martin and Kerraleigh that makes The August List such a spine-tingling proposition, and there are numerous moments across ‘Ramshackle Tabernacle’ where their more familiar duo form takes hold where they seem to be operating on an almost psychic level. Never overplaying the dramatic elements of their songs, they just let the melodies breathe, so when Kerraleigh hits a note that requires considerable vocal gymnastics (such as on the close of the ‘Wilderness’) it stands out as remarkable. For good measure they throw in ‘Palace In The Rocks’, which combines folk authenticity with pop *nous* and a vocal from Kerraleigh that Cindy Wilson would be proud of.

An eclectic mix of songs then, but don’t let the title fool you, The August List are far from ramshackle. This is a finely honed album that should go down as one of the best to ever come from an Oxford band.  
**Sam Shepherd**

beast that displays both Adam’s invention and lightness of touch and Lemmy’s deceptively sensitive songwriting ability up in the brightest of colours. The b-side of this single is a cover of Bowie’s ‘Thursday’s Child’, again a less than obvious pick, from 1999’s ‘Hours’, and something of a precursor for his farewell ‘Black Star’, revealing an impending frailty. Adam’s cover stays close to the original, as with the a-side, coating it in a midgy cloud of clicks, wows and whirrs, but vocally perhaps lacking Bowie’s cracked elegance. Stick ‘Iron Horse’ on again – it’s that rare thing, a genuinely worthwhile cover version.  
**Dale Kattack**



## VERNA HARK ‘Sparkling Blue EP’

*(Self released)*

Call me old fashioned but presenting your music on Youtube is considerably far down the evolutionary scale of ‘releases’ that has Tony Visconti paid a million quid to produce your album at one end and shouting doggerel into a dictaphone on a street corner at the other; but take nothing away from Verna Hark who continue their impressive run with a sequence of tunes that recall the oeuvre of defiantly contemporary scenesters London Grammar and The xx. EP opener ‘Kingdom’ commences with bombastic synth bursts, recreating that feeling of moving aimlessly from room to room in a club after the night has gone awry due to some emotional mishap, the vocalist lost in a haze of her own thoughts, peppered by explosions of aural fireworks reminiscent of a hands in the air anthem, but getting up to strut her stuff the last thing on her mind. Better still are the beats that underlie everything, evoking comparisons to the keyboard tinkerings of Jamie xx – a constantly inventive back palate that marks each track out as subtly different.

On ‘I Will Let You Go Unadorned’, staccato pulses like bullet fire are accompanied by what could be vocoder mangled vocals but are probably just a few previously neglected buttons being pressed, while co-title track ‘Sparkling Blue’ is a woozy refrain that reappears in different form as the album closes, via the ‘Snow Bow remix’, the three piece straying into These New Puritans territory with the deployment of a saxophone at the death. Personally, I’d prefer a remix to mark a distinctive change of pace – that doesn’t happen – but there’s still creative intent. Verna Hark divide their time between Helsinki and Oxford; the shimmering keyboards recall the weak sun glinting off the myriad lakes of the Finnish interior and as stand out song ‘August 06’ continues with the theme of feeling dislocated and rudderless by the excesses of a night out on the tiles, we are reminded of ‘Heartbeats’-era The Knife. In all though, this is an EP that very much reflects the musical directions of the current decade.  
**Rob Langham**



## GET LOOSE ‘Get Loose’

*(Self released)*

What does it mean to play within accepted stylistic boundaries, and is there a difference between working in a tradition and embracing a genre? For everyone who respects improvisations on established carnatic ragas but thinks trad jazz bands are dead-eyed rehashers, there’s another who bigs up old skool hip hop revivals whilst sniggering at morris dancers. The truth is, some musicians get inspired by playing to a previous

## THE LONG INSIDERS ‘Love Tortured Blue’

*(Self released)*

Playing such a classic form of music and with a strict adherence to its heritage can paint a band into a ghetto corner of its own making, but The Long Insiders slip past tribute band accusations with plenty of energy, a solid modern production and a feel for the songs that inspired them that gives them a life of their own. The trio’s rockabilly and surf rock rests on the classic rhythms of Carl Perkins and Johnny Burnette and the heavy twang of Dick Dale, but with some of Jim Jones’ punk-inspired bite adding enough contemporary oomph to keep the train rolling along its steadfast tracks. Lead track on this new EP, ‘My Love’ leans more towards the languid surf style, but the band are always at their best when they play it darker, as on ‘True Blue’, a tribute to brothers Nick and Simon Kenny’s late father, coming on like a gothic Roy Orbison. ‘Womankind’ is

## BEWARE THIS BOY ‘Tommy & Jack’ / Into the Light of the Day’

*(Self released)*

Oxfordshire’s rural hinterlands remain English folk music’s heartland with Cropredy as its nominal capital. You can just picture Beware This Boy playing at Fairport Convention’s annual gathering or one of the myriad taverns that dot the area, with a sound that’s barely changed since the English Civil War. Even the band’s claim on their website to be a mix of Fairport and The Clash misses the point that the sort of protest song they peddle was around for centuries before Joe Strummer strapped on a guitar. ‘Tommy & Jack’ is a tribute to the men who fought for their country on land and at sea, Tommy and Jack representing every young man – barely more

generation’s rules, and some get inspired by breaking them, and that’s fine; what’s weird is those who do one thing whilst being sure they’re doing the other. Take Get Loose’s press release, which claims their album ranges “from R&B you can dance to through to darker psychedelia”, when what it ranges from is mid-tempo blues rocking to the end of the record. On the plus side, it’s pretty decent mid-tempo blues rocking. The opening pair of tracks offer chunky-knit ‘Immigrant Song’-style cantering in ‘Forgive Me’ and Chuck Berry-flavoured... err... cantering in ‘Ride It Out’. The riffs and rhythms kick along nicely, the vocals are understated and pleasingly free of pantomime mid-west growls, and the solos are fluent yet concise. The lyrics won’t win any awards, but they’re far from the most egregious examples of priapic platitude in rock’s canon, and may have a little sly inversion of sexual boasting in ‘King Bee’ (if not it means the claim they are “able to buzz all night long” is meant seriously, and that the boys need to learn a little more about apian sexual hierarchies). Best to ignore that stuff and just nod your head to the incessant cowbell crunch of ‘Bullet’, our favourite track. ‘Get Loose’ is a very solid, reliable heavy blues album. That is both its victory and its curse, depending on where you’re standing.  
**David Murphy**



more Johnny Cash-style rockabilly blues and the whole thing, while steeped in a part of musical history that was long gone by the time any of the band were born, sounds fresher and more alive than most supposedly more contemporary guitar bands.  
**Ian Chesterton**

than boys – who “stood tall for England” so “we could be free”, but with Sue Mallett’s mournful fiddle and Simon Meakin’s plaintive, almost frail, vocals, it’s a lament for the lost rather than a chest-thumping display of patriotism and all the more affecting for that. ‘Into the Light of the Day’ feels more upbeat, the fiddle lead livelier, almost playful, but it’s less emotionally engaging even if an air of melancholy still lingers. Like ‘Tommy & Jack’, though, it sounds like music from any time from the last century, and their remains a small corner of England that is forever this kind of time-lost folk music.  
**Ian Chesterton**

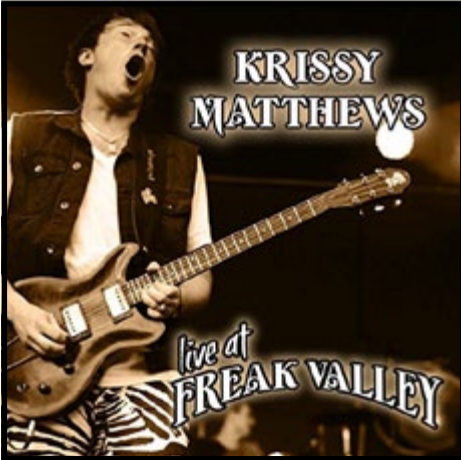
## KRISSY MATTHEWS ‘Live at Freak Valley’

*(Proper)*

The opening track of this album is called ‘Feeling For the Blues’ and serves as a rebuttal to critics (“blues purists”) who have told Krissy Matthews he can’t play the blues unless he’s old and has lived a life of hardship. By the end of this album *Nightshift* feels very old and like we’ve endured hardship beyond measure. The album clocks in at almost 70 minutes; the first guitar solo arrives before the first minute is up and lasts for over half the length of the song. There are many, many more along the way. This might be a long journey. No genre demands authenticity more than blues, particularly blues-rock; every month sees a slew of blues-rock bands coming to town, each quoting the same handful of untouchables as inspiration, one in particular, Stevie Ray Vaughan inadvertently responsible for more tedious fret-botherers than any single artist, people who merit technique over feeling every time. The two best blues acts in Oxford right now are Coldredlight and Vienna Ditto, both of whom are fronted by young women and neither of whom seem fussed about guitar solos, preferring to take the spirit of that old music into new places and to hell with whatever authenticity may or may not entail.

‘Live at Freak Valley’ is a textbook lesson in rock solid authenticity, in tradition, in doing things The Right Way (ie the way they’ve always been done). One song here, ‘The Soul Will Never Die’, is about meeting the late, great BB King once, while elsewhere Matthews covers Blind Willie McTell’s ‘Searching the Desert for the Blues’ and Hendrix’s ‘Freedom’ and with several years of solid gigging under his belt, this live recording from a gig in Germany covers every modern day blues-rock base, from the transatlantic vocal style to the regular extended guitar solo showboating which, however much the perpetrators might protest, is less about showing you how much they’re feeling this than making sure you know how clever they are. For an album recorded in a place called Freak Valley, it’s depressingly free of freakishness.

There’s a lot of energy expended and the regular whoops of the crowd suggest there’s plenty of people happy to lap this kind of stuff up, but we prefer our blues on the dark side and not stomped all over by rock excess. Music’s journey should always be forward and outward, never round in ever decreasing circles.  
**Dale Kattack**





# GIG GUIDE

## MONDAY 1<sup>st</sup>

**JOHN OTWAY: The Bear** (*6am*) – The Clown Prince of Pop plays his traditional May Morning show in the historic Bear.  
**THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Wheatsheaf** (*6.30am*) – May Morning show in the Sheaf’s downstairs bar from local blues/ska/funk/swamp rock veterans The Mighty Redox.  
**THE SKAMEISTERS: The Bear** (*4pm*) – Free afternoon of live ska for May Day.  
**TRIONYS: The White House** – Experimental improv, taking in jazz, avant garde rock and more from the German collective.  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Royal Blenheim** – Weekly open session.

## Thursday 4<sup>th</sup>

### SHAME: The Cellar

Fat White Family didn’t so much open the door as push the sewer cover off and in their wake have come a wave of bands fuelled by disgust and contempt and in their small way at least trying to shout about what’s wrong with this country right now. Among those are fellow south Londoners Shame who have toured with Fat Whites as well as Slaves and, most recently, Warpaint. The quintet wouldn’t ever claim responsibility for Sadiq Khan’s victory in last year’s London mayoral elections but they were one of a very few bands to stand up and be counted in support of him against lying Tory posh lad Zac Goldsmith. They also wrote a love song to Theresa May before she became prime minister, but it’s probably unfit for publication here; suffice to say they’re not fans. Militant in lyrics and action, musically Shame share some DNA with Fat White Family – particularly the sleazy, crawling scuzzbucket single ‘The Lick’, with its tale of a man addicted to visiting a gynaecologist, but there are also trace elements of Drenge, The Fall, Sonic Youth and even New Fast Automatic Daffodils in among the grubby post-punk pavement-level songs. Their live shows are earning them rave reviews, with nakedness and broken things often the order of the day and if they won’t ever change the world it’s increasingly refreshing to see bands who not only adhere to rock’s primal urges but aren’t afraid to nail their colours firmly to a political mast.



# MAY

## TUESDAY 2<sup>nd</sup>

**THE NIGHT CAFÉ + SAFE TO SWIM + BLOXX: The Bullingdon** – Exuberantly funky indie jangle from Liverpool’s fast-rising youngsters, back in town after recent supports to The Hunna and Sundara Karma.  
**SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern** – Weekly open mic session with host Sparky.  
**OSPREY: St Aldates Tavern** – Upbeat funky blues from the local stalwart and chums.

## WEDNESDAY 3<sup>rd</sup>

**THE ANDREWS COMBS BAND: The Bullingdon** – Elegantly downbeat alt.country in the vein of Leonard Cohen, Harry Nilsson and Glen Campbell from Nashville troubadour Combs at tonight’s Empty Room show, the singer and guitarist touring his new album, ‘Canyons of My Mind’, the follow-up to his acclaimed 2014 debut, ‘All These Dreams’.  
**BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE: The Cellar** – 80s hits, glam, synth-pop and disco club night.

## THURSDAY 4<sup>th</sup>

**MORGAN HERITAGE & ETANA: O2 Academy** – Rock, pop, hip hop and country-tinged reggae from New York’s enduring all-brother band, out on a European tour to promote their eleventh studio album, ‘Avrakedabra’, featuring Ziggy and Stephen Marley among a star cast of contributors, and riding high on the back of a Grammy award for 2015’s ‘Strictly Roots’ album.  
**SHAME: The Cellar** – Barricade-storming post-punk from south London’s pop warriors – *see main preview*  
**THE TROY REDFERN BAND: The Bullingdon** – Blues rocking from Herefordshire guitarist and singer Troy Redfern, back at the Haven Club after supporting Gwyn Ashton here last year, his groove-led style inspired by Johnny Winter, Hound Dog Taylor and Dave Hole, among others.  
**CHASING DAYLIGHT: Truck Store** (*6pm*) – Instore launch show for their new ‘Live At the O2’ 7”, the band mixing up Kinks, Blockheads and Dr Feelgood in their r’n’b-flavoured Britpop.  
**THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Wheatsheaf** – Free gig in the downstairs bar from the veteran local blues-rockers.  
**SELF HELP + PORT ERIN + CATGOD + BEN AVISON: The Jericho Tavern** – It’s All About the Music local bands showcase.  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre** – Oxford’s longest running open club night continues to showcase singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and performance artists every week.  
**SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half**

**Moon** – Weekly open session.  
**ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure** – Weekly unplugged open mic session.  
**BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford** – Open blues jam.  
**GLUE: The Cellar** – Techno and house club night.

## FRIDAY 5<sup>th</sup>

**BOSSAPHONIK with GRUPO X: The Cellar** – Latin dance, global grooves, Afropop, Balkan beats and nu-jazz club night with a live set from Latin jazz-soul-bugalu fusion outfit Grupo X, regulars at the Camden Jazz Café and collaborators with Latin soul king Joe Bataan. Plus world jazz dance sounds on the decks from host Dan Ofer.  
**WILLIE J HEALEY: Modern Art Oxford** – A free headline show – already sold out – from local rising slacker rock star Willie, the prolific songsmith having just come off tour with Palace and rock and strolling it out in the vein of Mac Demarco, Ariel Pink and War On Drugs.  
**KLUB KAKOFANNEY with BEAVER FUEL + SPINNER FALL + LAKE OF KINGS + LAIMA: The Wheatsheaf** – Local indie/punkers Beaver Fuel celebrate their tenth anniversary of innuendo, irreverence and bolshy pop noise with a headline show for Klub Kakofanney, joined tonight by 80s hardcore-inspired noisemakers Spinner Fall and singer-songwriter Laima Bite.  
**SHOWADDYWADDY: The New Theatre** – True story: last time *Nightshift* saw Showaddywaddy live (okay, the only time we’ve ever seen them live) they were supporting Einsterzende Neubaten, surviving an early hail of pint glasses to near enough blow their Teutonic drill-core chums off stage. So we’ve always had a serious amount of respect for the retro rockabilly fellas from Leicester, and anyway, ‘Under the Moon of Love’ is a corker, ain’t it? In fact we’ve got out pastel-coloured Teddy Boy suits on already.  
**HOLLY REDFORD-JONES + CHALK + JUNIPER NIGHTS + SEMI URBAN FOX + FUJI: O2 Academy** – It’s All About the Music showcase night with smoky jazz, r’n’b and rockabilly singer Holly Redford Jones, coming in somewhere between Billie Holiday and Imelda May, plus fidgety electro-pop from London trio Chalk. Acoustic rock from Juniper Nights and Libertines-y indie rocking from Semi Urban Fox.  
**SPARKY’S SPONTANEOUS SHOWCASE & SPOTLIGHT JAM: James Street Tavern** – Bands and open mic session hosted by Sparky, tonight with Chicago funsters Monk 9, plus Hurricane and The Mighty Reverend Black  
**JOHN COGHLAN’S QUO: Kidlington Football Club** – Status Quo’s original drummer brings Quo classics to the Shire.  
**THE MIGHTY DISCO BISCUITS: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Classic soul, funk and disco hits.

## SATURDAY 6<sup>th</sup>

**WARD THOMAS: O2 Academy** – Back in town as part of their biggest headline tour to

date after performances at Cornbury Festival and Halfway To 75 in recent times, Hampshire-born, Nashville-based twin sisters Ward Thomas come to the O2 continuing to promote 2016 album ‘Cartwheels’, the follow-up to their acclaimed debut, ‘From Where We Stand’, recorded with country music mainstay Vince Gill.  
**BIGFOOT + REGULUS + NEW GENERATION SUPERSTARS + HELL’S GAZELLES: O2 Academy** – Long-haired, leather-clad heavy rocking out of Wigan from Bigfoot, the band off on a headline tour after supporting Black Spiders on their farewell tour, the band rocking it in the style of Led Zep, AC/DC and Judas Priest. Support from Sheffield’s stoner stalwarts Regulus; Nottingham’s punk-infused hard rockers New Generation Superstars, and Oxford’s own rock heavyweights Hell’s Gazelles, kicking it out in a Guns’n’Roses-meets-Judas Priest fashion..  
**YONAKA + GURR: The Cellar** – Epic dark indie noise from Brighton’s Yonaka, back in town, out on a joint headline tour with Berlin’s excellent garage-pop duo Gurr, mixing 80s indie jangle and surf-pop with sleepy-eyed alt.pop in the vein of Life Without Buildings and Best Coast.  
**MOLOTV SEXBOMB: The Wheatsheaf** – Punk-infused rocking from the local regulars.  
**FREERANGE: The Cellar** – UK garage, grime and bassline club night.  
**EYECON + W.A.M: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Mod classics from Eyecon, plus ska-punk faves from W.A.M.

## SUNDAY 7<sup>th</sup>

**BLOODSTOCK – METAL TO THE MASSES: The Bullingdon** – Quarter-final of the battle of the bands competition to win a slot at this summer’s Bloodstock Festival, tonight with Bloodshot, Echo4four, 1000 Chains and Silk Road, plus more.  
**DR ROBERT + MATT DEIGHTON: The Cellar** – A joint tour from former Blow Monkeys frontman Dr Robert alongside guitarist Matt Deighton, originally of Acid Jazz faves Mother Earth and subsequently guitarist for Paul Weller and, for a while, Oasis.  
**MAD LARRY + SUPERLOOSE + MARK BOSLEY BAND + PURPLE MAY + SPOON THEORY: The Wheatsheaf** (*3.30-8.30pm*) – Free live music in the downstairs bar from Giddyup Music, with classic r’n’b man Mad Larry, rootsy rockers Superloose and gothic troubadour Mark Bosley.  
**FRANKLIN’S TOWER + ANNELI + SAM POPE + ECLECTICA: Donnington Community Centre** (*6pm*) – Free early evening of live acoustic music, with Grateful Dead tribute act Franklin’s Tower and more.  
**THE MIGHTY REDOX: Harry’s Bar** (*3.30pm*)  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Harcourt Arms**

## MONDAY 8<sup>th</sup>

**SAM BROOKES: The Cellar** – Intimate electro-folk-pop inspired by Nick Drake, Bon Iver and Tim Buckley from the London singer and former chorister to the Queen, out on a headline tour ahead of the release of his new album, having previously supported Newton Faulkner and featured on Basement Jaxx’s ‘What A Difference Your Love Makes’.  
**OXFORD CLASSIC JAZZ: The Harcourt**

**Arms**  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Royal Blenheim**  
**THE RHEINGANS SISTERS: Nettlebed Folk Club** – Sisters Rowan and Anna Rheingans come to Nettlebed’s legendary folk club; Rowan has previously been best known for her work as part of Lady Maisery and with Eliza Carthy and Karine Polwart in Songs of Separation. The sisters have recorded two albums together, fusing the folk sounds of their native Peak District with traditional influences from Scandinavia and France (where Anna lives and is an in-demand fiddle play); expect multi-instrumental virtuosity and close harmonies.

## TUESDAY 9<sup>th</sup>

**JAPANESE HOUSE: O2 Academy** – Sweet, sweet sorrow from the ambient house – *see main preview*  
**INTRUSION: The Cellar** – Goth, industrial, ebm and darkwave club night.  
**SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern**

## WEDNESDAY 10<sup>th</sup>

**THE MAGIC GANG: O2 Academy** – Brighton’s pop-friendly slacker-grunge gang return to town after their sold-out show here in September and their set at last summer’s Truckfest, building up to the release of their debut album following a string of singles and EPs, managing to find that sweet spot meeting point between Brian Wilson, Weezer and Mac Demarco.  
**THE TUTS + RAINBOW RESERVOIR + HAPPY ACCIDENTS: The Cellar** – Indie-pop, punk and attitude from the west London trio, fresh from tour supports to The Selecter and Feeder – *see main preview*  
**IT’S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC SHOWCASE: The Wheatsheaf**  
**QUERCUS: St. John the Evangelist** – Oxford Contemporary Music host an evening with June Tabor’s folk-jazz collaboration with pianist Huw Warren and saxophonist Ian Ballamy.

## THURSDAY 11<sup>th</sup>

**LITTLE BROTHER ELI: Truck Store** – The local funk-blues-rock faves warm up for their O2 headline show on the 19<sup>th</sup> with an instore set.  
**STEVE RODGERS: The Bullingdon** – Soulful blues-rocking in the vein of Jeff Buckley, Ray Lamontagne and Scott Matthews from former Bôa frontman Steve Rodgers and son of Free and Bad Company singer Paul Rodgers.  
**FREEMANTLE: Jericho Tavern** – Psychedelia and shoegaze from the local pop dreamers.  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**  
**SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half Moon**  
**ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure**  
**BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford**

## FRIDAY 12<sup>th</sup>

**AN END OF AN ERA: O2 Academy** – Funky rocking and electronica from Dave & the Ravers at tonight’s Brookes bash, also featuring Five Quarters of a Quartet, We Only Play Theme Tunes, Ivory and Chloe Chesney & Friends.



## Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup>

### THE JAPANESE

#### HOUSE: O2 Academy

A semi regular visitor to Oxford over the last couple of years, Amber Bain – who is The Japanese House – is back tonight playing her biggest local show yet, but prior to this headline tour ahead of the release of her debut album she’d been playing arena-sized venues as support to long time chums and labelmates The 1975. They produced The Japanese House’s debut EP, ‘Pools To Bathe In’, which a lot of people thought was singer Matt Healy, he and Bain sharing a similarly dreamy vocal quality. But anyway, with a little help from her friends, she’s starting to enjoy the success she deserves as she drifts sad-eyed through sparse, ethereal synth-pop, all barely-there beats, breathless, heavily-effected vocals and introspective, atmospheric melodies that have drawn comparisons to London Grammar, The xx and Grimes at various points and wouldn’t sound out of place alongside our own Esther Joy Lane. She also earned herself a place on the BBC Sound of 2017 long list, a measure as much of her rising commercial potential as her musical quality, reflected in her move up to the O2 from earlier shows at The Cellar. The overriding bleakness in her songs might not ring with impending summer, but a little chill in the air is always welcome.

**WILL JOSEPH COOK: The Bullingdon** – Airy pop in the vein of Phoenix and Vampire Weekend from the Kent singer-songwriter, touring debut album ‘Sweet Dreamer’. Followed by an indie disco with Will taking a turn on the decks.  
**TOM WALKER: The Cellar** – We blame Ed Sheeran. Or maybe Sam Smith.  
**DEMOISELLES + THE AUTUMN SAINTS: The Wheatsheaf** – It’s All About the Music showcase with local rockers Demoiselles, plus atmospheric Americana from The Autumn Saints.  
**HOLY MOLY & THE CRACKERS + DEADBEAT APOSTLES: Old Fire Station** – Gypsy folk-rock from well-travelled septet Holy

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Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup>  
**THE TUTS /  
RAINBOW  
RESERVOIR:  
The Cellar**

There are, famously, three sides to every story: my side, your side and the truth. As such we'll probably never know the real ins and outs of The Tuts being kicked out of Brighton's Undercover Festival last year while trying to join The Selecter onstage, but the incident left a sour taste in everyone's mouth and overshadowed the release of their excellent debut album, 'Update Your Brain', crowdfunded on Pledgemusic, reaching its target in under a week and a record that runs a big red motorbike through punk, 80s indie and riot grrl, with X Ray Spex as its starting point and ending up at the finish line alongside Martha having stopped off at Talulah Gosh and The Julie Ruin along the way. Formed at school in west London by friends Nadia Javed and Beverley Ishmael, they recruited bassist Harriet Doveton from Colour Me Wednesday and since their first gig in 2011 they've supported Kate Nash, The Selecter, Sonic Boom Six and latterly Feeder, as well as playing Indietracks and, at the invitation of Billy Bragg, the Leftfield stage at Glastonbury, mixing pure pop with spiky punk spirit and feminist politics; it's simple, direct DIY music that deserves to rise above any rancour. Suitably ebullient support from local pop-punkers Rainbow Reservoir whose mix of Mouldy Peaches, Ben Folds and Le Tigre always brings the musical sunshine.

Moly & the Crackers, taking in klezmer, Balkan folk, ska and reggae in their world fusion sound. Great local support from Americana-tinged classic soul ensemble The Deadbeat Apostles.

**SOFA SOUNDS: University of Natural History** – The Oxford arm of the global pop-up gig movement hosts an acoustic stage as part of the Museum of Natural History's Neuro Night, with a night of talks and activities focussing on music and the brain.

**SATURDAY 13<sup>th</sup>**  
**THE AUGUST LIST + VIENNA DITTO + LOUD MOUNTAINS: The Cellar** – Superb local triple bill, with last month's *Nightshift* cover stars The August List launching their brilliant new album, 'Ramshackle Tabernacle', bringing atmospheric drones to bear on their rustic folk and Americana as they bring stories of hermits and isolation to music life. They're joined by elegantly mayhemc synthabilly jazz-blues-pop duo Vienna Ditto, taking Nina Simone into the 25<sup>th</sup> Century, while Connecticut-born and raised

brothers Sean and Kevin Duggan bring their rootsy country-rock to the party. As far as local gigs goes, tonight's is unmissable.

**DESERT STORM + CONTEK + THE REAPER + SHATTERED COMPASS + A NIGHTMARE UPON US: O2 Academy** – Skeletor host a seriously heavyweight local bill with Oxford's leading heavy rock crew Desert Storm coming off the back of another European tour, bringing blues and psychedelic elements to play on their raw, monolithic blues/stoner-metal sound. They're joined by ambient post-hardcore types Kontek; melodic thrash and NWOBHM from The Reaper; metalcore merchants Shattered Compass, and epic gothic metal from A Nightmare Upon Us.

**OXFORD SOUL TRAIN: O2 Academy** – Classic soul, funk, disco and Motown tunes across two rooms at the quarterly extravaganza.

**STEVE HACKETT: The New Theatre** – The Genesis guitarist brings his new band to town, playing a selection of classic Genesis tracks, including songs from 'Wind & Wuthering', which is 40 years old this year, plus rarely performed tracks like 'The Music Box', 'Inside & Out' and 'Anyway', as well as material from his new solo album and across his expansive back catalogue.

**SELF HELP + THE OUTSIDE + ONE COLOUR SHORT + BEL & JACK: The Wheatsheaf** – Local bands showcase, with new wave and garage pop from Self Help.

**STRAIGHT OUTTA COWLEY: The Bullingdon** – Hip hop club night.

**THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Black Swan**

**MAD LARRY: Tap Social Movement, Botley** – Classic 60s r'n'b covers and originals.

**TURF: The Cellar** – house club night.

**DAMN GOOD REASON: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Classic rock covers.

**MUDSLIDE MORRIS & THE REVELATORS: The Dolphin, Wallingford** – Blues and boogie in the vein of Seasick Steve and Rory Gallagher.

**SUNDAY 14<sup>th</sup>**  
**NATUREBOY: Truck Store (4pm)** – Album launch show from the local singer-songwriter, playing songs from 'Setting of the Sun', his first album in eight years.

**PAUL RODGERS: The New Theatre** – Just three nights after his Son Steve plays the Bully, the former Free, Bad Company and Queen singer comes to town, his trademark aggressive vocal style a major influence on the likes of Bruce Dickinson, David Coverdale, Steve Walsh and Joe Bonamassa and earning him an Ivor Novello award for Outstanding Contribution to British Music in 2011. Although he's been back gigging with Bad Company in recent years tonight's show is part of a solo tour, but expect numbers from across his extensive career.

**THREEPENNY BIT + XOGARA + THE RIVERS: The Bullingdon** – Energetic trad tunes from Southampton's folk-dance big band, mixing in elements of jazz and classical music into their traditional and original material; support from Anglo-Welsh-Galician folk trio Xogara.

**THE SPOOK SCHOOL + BAD MOVES + RAINBOW RESERVOIR + CHEAP DATE: The Library** – More high-quality, lo-fidelity fun from Smash Disco, celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> gig in style with Scotland's queercore indie-punks, signed to Fortuna Pop, plus power pop from Washington DC's Bad Moves; effervescent post-

riot-grrl pop from Rainbow Reservoir and messy bedroom synth-pop from Cheap Date.

**SELF HELP + THE FIREGAZERS + JESTERS + DAVE TOMLINSON + MARIO & ROBERTO: The Wheatsheaf (2.30pm)** – Klub Kakofanney host a free afternoon of unplugged music in the Sheaf's downstairs bar.

**WITH LOVE & REVOLUTION: The Jam Factory** – A free night of live music, poetry and comedy in aid of anti sexual harassment movement Hollabach, with music from singer and pianist Frances Salter and poetry from Ilhan Dahir.

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Harcourt Arms**

**STEAM ROLLER: The Bell, Bicester (5-8pm)** – 60s-style blues rock in the vein of Hendrix and Cream from the veteran local rockers.

**MONDAY 15<sup>th</sup>**  
**HOWIE PAYNE: The Bullingdon** – The former Stands frontman returns to gigging after an

*Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup>*  
**THE COMET IS COMING / FLAMINGODS / WANDERING WIRES: O2 Academy**  
Shabaka Hutchings is a busy man, playing saxophone with Melt Yourself Down and Sons of Kemet as well as being a part-time members of The Arkestra. He's also at the core of The Comet is Coming where he becomes King Shabaka, channelling the cosmic jazz spirit of Sun Ra, whose legacy he spends much of his musical life keeping alive. That spirit of Egyptian Kemeticism runs through each of his bands, particularly The Comet Is Coming – a band formed when he simply decided to join electronica duo Soccer96 onstage one night and things spiralled quickly into outer space, or at least as far as a deserved Mercury nomination for last year's 'Channel the Spirits' album. Together the trio (drummer Max 'Betamax Killer' Hallett and synth player Dan 'Danalogue the Conquerer' Leaves alongside Hutchings) fuse Sun Ra's exploratory jazz with electronics, acid house, psychedelia and afrobeat for a trippy jazz-funk journey that's aimed equally at expanded minds and dancing feet. Track titles like 'Space Carnival', 'Slam Dunk in a Black Hole' and 'Star Furnace' are a good indicator of where they're headed. Off to Saturn to join the grand master. Great support tonight from Bahrain-via-Brixton crew Flamingods, who mix African rhythms and feverish electro-pop to strange effect, and local electro-jazz explorers Wandering Wires, taking in dub, discordant rock experimentation and more.



extended hiatus, out on tour to celebrate a vinyl release of his debut solo album 'Bright Light Ballads' and the release of a comprehensive Stands retrospective box set, the 90s band big favourites of Noel Gallagher and tour support to Paul Weller, Gomez, The Coral and Richard Ashcroft back in their heyday.

**THE PHIL BEER BAND: Nettlebed Folk Club** – A return to Nettlebed for the former Albion Band and Show of Hands folk veteran, the singer and multi-instrumentalist backed by a new band.

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Royal Blenheim**

**TUESDAY 16<sup>th</sup>**  
**THE COMET IS COMING + FLAMINGODS + WANDERING WIRES: O2 Academy** – Cosmic jazz explorations from the Mercury-nominated funk astronauts – *see main preview*  
**THE COATHANGERS: The Bullingdon** – Former garage-pop jokers keep getting better but never lose their sense of fun – *see main preview*  
**MAMA FEELGOOD: The Cellar** – Afrobeat , disco, funk, soul, Chicago House and hip hop club night  
**SPARK'S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern**  
**OSPREY & FRIENDS: St Aldates Tavern**  
**COOPE, BOYES & SIMPSON: Nettlebed Folk Club** – Celebrating the centenary of the death in WWI of Nettlebed Village Club founder Valentine Fleming (also father of Bond writer Ian), with South Yorkshire/Derbyshire vocal trio Coope, Boyes and Simpson, calling it a day with one last album and tour after 24 years on the road together, singing close-harmony songs of social comment, and tonight featuring a selection of songs from the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and joined by fellow Nettlebed regulars Steve Knightley and Megan Henwood. All proceeds will go to the Village Club Roof Fund.

**WEDNESDAY 17<sup>th</sup>**  
**NORTHTOWN SCARECROWS: The Wheatsheaf**  
**BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE: The Cellar**

**THURSDAY 18<sup>th</sup>**  
**THE MISSION + SKELETAL FAMILY + PAULINE MURRAY: O2 Academy** – 80s goth heroes The Mission celebrate 30 years of keeping it darkly flamboyant with Craig Adams back in the fold alongside frontman Wayne Hussey, the band playing tracks from 2016's 'Another Fall From Grace' as well as songs from their 80s heyday, including 'Serpent's Kiss', 'Tower of Strength' and 'Wasteland'. Gothtastic support from fellow Yorkshire cult faves Skeletal Family, fronted by Anne-Marie Hurst, and former Penetration singer Pauline Murray.

**RYLEY WALKER: The Bullingdon** – The rising young star of English folk music returns to Oxford having played a show with Danny Thompson here last

year, the singer enthusiastically compared to Bert Jansch, Tim Buckley, John Fahey and Van Morrison for his mix of jazz looseness, rustic picking, full-blooded blues and lysergic leanings. His recent album 'Primrose Green', is named after a strain of hash, but reflects the lush, verdant rustic idyll of olde England, and carries a suitably hazy vibe about it.

**DJ FORMAT & ABDOMINAL: The Cellar** – Funky, upbeat hip hop and savvy rhymes from the long-standing DJ and rapper duo, back on tour to promote new album 'Still Hungry'.

**SEBASTIAN REYNOLDS & GUESTS + SERGIO BEERCOCK + AFTER THE THOUGHT: Albion Beatnik Bookshop** – An intimate evening of piano music from veteran local keyboard man and Pindrop promoter Seb, playing music from his forthcoming solo albums, alongside Sicilian singer-songwriter Sergio Beercock and local electro soundscapest After the Thought.

**THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Wheatsheaf** – Free show in the downstairs bar from the funk-ska-blues-rock faves.

**ASH LEWIS + BLESS THIS MESS + JAE: Jericho Tavern** – It's All About the Music local bands showcase.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

**SPARKY'S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half Moon**

**ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure**

**BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford**

**FRIDAY 19<sup>th</sup>**  
**WOOD FESTIVAL: Braziers Park, Ipsden** – The pioneering eco-fest returns for its ninth outing, with sets from The Magic Numbers, CC Smugglers, Ben Ottewell and many, many more, alongside hedgehog-themed activities – *see main preview*  
**UPRISING with LITTLE BROTHER ELI + LUCY LEAVE + HARRY PANE + GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS + SLEEPERS DOME: O2 Academy** – The O2 teams up with BBC Introducing in Oxford again for a showcase of up and coming local and local-ish acts. Headlining tonight are regular live favourites and previous *Nightshift* cover stars Little Brother Eli, mixing up livewire funky rock with blues and soul, coming on like a hard-to-resist mix of White Denim, Black Keys, White Stripes and Red Hot Chili Peppers. Great support from oddball punk-prog-jazz-pop sound manglers Lucy Leave; Northampton folk-soul-blues songsmith Harry Pane; cinematic instrumental post-rockers Ghosts in the Photographs, and electro-prog from former Aureate Act people Sleepers' Dome.

**SMOOVE & TURRELL + WITNEY SOUL CLUB: The Bullingdon** – North-East duo Smoove & Turrell bring their "northern funk" to tonight's Glovebox show, mixing up northern soul, jazz and hip hop, the band originally championed by Craig Charles. Summer supports to the likes of Chic and Martha Reeves and the Vandellas have broadened their fanbase and they're on tour to promote fourth album 'Crown

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*Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup>*

## THE COATHANGERS: The Bullingdon

If you wanted to form a band purely and simply to piss off blokes with expensive equipment and the idea that technique, tightness and all due reverence for the rock greats are the holy trinity of music making you couldn't make one better then The Coathangers already are and have been for ten years now. Formed in Atlanta as a joke, named in grotesquely irreverent homage to backstreet abortions to annoy "pro-lifers" and armed with songs with titles like 'Nestle in My Boobies', 'Don't Touch My Shit' and 'Shut the Fuck Up', they gone from a ramshackle, lo-fi garage-rock mess who could give The Shaggs a run for their money, to a rather more honed lo-fi garage-pop unit in the vein of The Delta 5, The Au Pairs and Shopping, whose deliberately disjointed, off-kilter approach to songwriting has seen them release five studio albums and support the likes of Refused and Black Lips. The most recent of those albums, 'Nosebleed Weekend', contains their catchiest pop songs yet while never losing touch with the simple, exuberant punk spirit that's defined them since the start. Its high point comes with 'Squeeki Tiki', whose chorus is played on a squeaky rubber duck, which is unlikely to win them an army of new fans among people who think Stevie Ray Vaughan is a pinnacle of creativity. They're silly, they're spiky, they write daftly catchy noise-pop songs and they upset musos and moralists in equal measures. Of course we love them.

Posade'.  
**BOSSAPHONIK with GRUPO LOKITO: The Bullingdon** – World jazz dance club night with exuberant Congolese soukous and Afro-Cuban dance from Grupo Lokito, recent winners of the Lucas UK Award for best tropical act of the year, fronted by livewire singer/dancer duo Eugene Makuta and Iddo Donnatella. Host Dan Ofer

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plays Latin jazz, Balkan beats, nu jazz, Afrobeat and more on the decks.  
**BRICKWORK LIZARDS: The Cellar** – Oxford's self-styled Turkobilly ensemble return to live action, fusing rock, hip hop, jazz and traditional Arabic music into a summery pop pilaff.  
**SOUL SESSIONS: The Cellar** – Classic soul, funk and disco.  
**FERAL SUN + BETH BLADE & THE BEAUTIFUL DISASTERS + BROKEN DEVICE: The Wheatsheaf** – Epic, emotive melodic soft rock in the vein of Alter Bridge and Stone Sour from London's Feral Sun at tonight's OxRox show, with support from Cardiff's heavyweights Beth Blade, touring their debut album 'Bad Habit' after supporting Ricky Warwick on tour.  
**GOAT GIRL: Modern Art Oxford** – Already sold-out free gig from south London's slow-burning grunge/garage rockers Goat Girl, coming on like a smouldering, surfed-up mix of Courtney Barnett, Tanya Donnelly and Thee Headcoatees on recent Rough Trade debut 'Country Sleaze', and named in honour of Bill Hicks alter-ego Goat Boy.  
**LISA SINGS STREISAND: The Cornerstone, Didcot** – The songs of Barbara Streisand.  
**THE CORSAIRS: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Live rockabilly, punk and psychobilly.

### SATURDAY 20<sup>th</sup>

**WOOD FESTIVAL: Braziers Park, Ipsden WITTSTOCK: Oxford Saracens RFC (-11pm)** – After a year off, the free festival returns with a new home, this year raising money for the Headways and Rosy charities. Today's line-up features Jules Penzo; Von Braun; OX4 Allstars; Beaverfuel; The Mark Bosley Band; Trevor Williams; The Shapes; Skeptica; Mad Larry and Order #227. Entry is free but donations are welcome.  
**THE VERVE EXPERIENCE: O2 Academy** – The experience of being trapped in 1997 surrounded by people who look like Noel Gallagher.  
**GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with UNMAN + LITTLE DEATH MACHINE + LA PHOOKA: The Wheatsheaf** – Searing drones, battering ram math-rock rhythms, screams and skronking sax, from Unman at tonight's Gappy Tooth Industries, the group made up of dronemeister Lee Riley, members of Masiro and improv sax destroyer John Grieve and sounding like a cyborg hornets nest moments before it reaches critical mass and explodes. Dark, gothic industrial sci-fi pop inspired by Depeche Mode, Nine Inch Nails and Massive Attack from London's Little Death Machine in support, plus some rousing folk-pop from openers Le Phooka

by way of light relief.

**FELLA, IT'S GERALD + STEPHEN HERO + ROSS KING: The Cellar** – Student bands night with blues rocker Fella, It's Gerald, standing in because Billie was on holiday.  
**FLUID: The Cellar** – Bassline, drum&bass and grime club night with Masp hosting a line-up featuring Sound Affect, VLVT, Wissla and Cryptic  
**PAT REEDY + AGS CONNOLLY: Fat Lil's, Witney** – The final night of a joint headline UK and Ireland tour for Nashville's broken-hearted, soul-searching country singer Pat Reedy,

touring his acclaimed 'Highway Bound' album, and local country roots champion and recent *Nightshift* cover star Ags Connolly.

### SUNDAY 21<sup>st</sup>

**WOOD FESTIVAL: Braziers Park, Ipsden** – Third and final day of the eco-friendly festival – *see main preview*  
**WITTSTOCK: Oxford Saracens RFC (midday – 10pm)** – Second day of the free charity festival, today with sets from Bright Works; Cosmosis; Jinj'oranj; The Phat Cardinals; John Poet; The Ponderosa; Freddy le Cragg; Otto; Mermaid Noises; Sam & Sarah Jane, and Country For Old Men.  
**BLOODSTOCK – METAL TO THE MASSES: The Bullingdon** – Quarter-final of the battle of the bands competition to win a slot at this summer's Bloodstock Festival, tonight with Twisted State of Mind, Cherokii, Crimson Tusk, Burning Horizon and Promethean Reign.  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Harcourt Arms**

### MONDAY 22<sup>nd</sup>

**BELIEFS + THE BECKONING FAIR ONES + FANCY DRESS PARTY: The Cellar** – Blissed-out shoegaze in a My Bloody Valentine vein from Toronto's Beliefs at tonight's Divine Schism show, with jagged, angular post-hardcore from TBFO in support.  
**FAIRPORT CONVENTION: Nettlebed Folk Club** – The Godfathers of English folk-rock return to the intimate setting of Nettlebed's historic folk club.  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Royal Blenheim**

### TUESDAY 23<sup>rd</sup>

**BARCELONA FLAMENCO: The Cellar** – Live flamenco with dancer Ariadna Molina, guitarist Jero Ferec and singer Angel Marquez.  
**SPARK'S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern**

### WEDNESDAY 24<sup>th</sup>

**AOIFE O'DONOVAN + BLAIR DUNLOP: The Bullingdon** – A welcome return to Oxford courtesy of Empty Room promotions for country/folk/bluegrass artist Aoife O'Donovan, the singer having become a regular in town over the last few years, having made her name as lead singer with progressive bluegrass band Crooked Still, her musical reach extending far and wide, with myriad collaborations under her belt – including with Goat Rodeo Sessions and Punch Brothers, as well as with Sarah Jarosz and Nickel Creek's Sara Watkins, as well as writing a hit single, 'Lay My Burden Down', for Alison Krauss – a neat turnaround given Krauss's influence on Aoife's own music. Her mellow, almost ethereal vocal style in her recent solo work has taken her down a different road from Crooked Still, steeped in the southern blues and folk traditions.  
**BABEHEAVEN: The Cellar** – Woozy, ethereal indie pop from London's Babeheaven, back in town after supporting Beach Baby last year.  
**GUNFINGERS: The Cellar** – Grime, r'n'b and bassline club night with DJs Femi 2 Strings featuring MC Mike, Don Lou Lou, and SE10's Ozzie and Nick.

### THURSDAY 25<sup>th</sup>

**RAHAT FATEH ALI KHAN: The Sheldonian** – After performing with The Fusion Project here

in October last year, the Pakistani Sufi musician, nephew of the legendary Nusrat and son of Farrukh, headlines at the historic concert venue, playing in the Qawwali tradition of devotional music.

**EMILY BARKER: Truck Store** – An intimate instore show from the Australian singer, playing songs from her new solo album, 'Sweet Kind of Blue'.

**THE RIFLES UNPLUGGED: The Bullingdon** – East London's Jam-inspired mod-rockers strip down to their acoustic undies.

**OTHERKIN: The Cellar** – Free show from Dublin's grungy indie rockers, back in town after supporting Amazons at their sold-out show in March. You'll still need to get a ticket, and they'll go fast, so off you pop.

**SOFAR SOUNDS DOES COMMON PEOPLE: Venue TBC** – The pop-up gig network hosts a pre-Common People show at a venue to be disclosed to ticket holders ahead of the show, featuring sets from acts due to play the South Park festival. See their website for ticket details.

**ARMOIRES + PLASTIC SOUL + HUXLEY RITTMAN + THE RUSTY HITMEN + CHARMS AGAINST THE EVIL EYE: The Jericho Tavern** – It's All About the Music local bands showcase.  
**DAPHNE'S FLIGHT: The Cornerstone, Didcot** – Back in action after 21 years off after the release of their one and only album, the all-female harmony group, featuring Chris While, Christine Collister, Helen Watson, Melanie Harrold and Julie Matthews, mix up jazz, blues, folk and pop on a range of original songs and covers of Elvis Costello and The Beach Boys among others.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**  
**SPARKY'S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half Moon**  
**ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure**  
**BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford**

### FRIDAY 26<sup>th</sup>

**ZAIA + DOCUMENT ONE + SHUMBA YOUTH + MULTIFARI: The Bullingdon** – This month's *Nightshift* cover stars launch their debut album ahead of a headline set on the Uncommon stage at Common People – *see main interview feature*  
**TWISTED STATE OF MIND + K LACURA + THE HOPE BURDEN + OVERDOG + OCEAN OF APATHY + CRYSTALLITE: O2 Academy** – Church of the Heavy with high-octane thrash and melodic metal from TSOM, hardcore thrash from K-Lacura and instrumental post-metal from The Hope Burden.  
**PRIMITAI + GUNS OF ANARCHY + CHEROKII: The Wheatsheaf** – Classic NWOBHM and 80s thrash from Berkshire's Primitai at tonight's OxRox show, the band out on tour to promote their new album 'Night Brings Insanity', having previously supported Saxon, Grand Magus and more. Support comes from Watford's melodic hard rockers Guns of Anarchy, previous support to Gun'n'Roses and Meenstead, plus local beats'n'riff beasts Cherokii.  
**THE AVULSIONS + EGRETS + WOLFS:**

**The Library** – Atmospheric, gothic synth-pop from Canada's Avulsions at tonight's Divine Schism show, the band's dark, serpentine sound in the vein of 4AD's 80s output, particularly Xmal Deutschland. Indie rock from local supergroup Egrets in support, plus grungy garage-rock in the mould of Hole and The Runaways from Wolfs.  
**SN DUBSTATION: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Reggae, ska and dub from Swindon's eight-piece fusion crew.

### SATURDAY 27<sup>th</sup>

**COMMON PEOPLE: South Park** – Sean Paul heads the line-up at the second Common People extravaganza – *see main preview*  
**NOVANA: O2 Academy** – The tricksily monikered tribute band defy all odds by actually being Yesvana – playing all your favourite 90s self-hate anthems.  
**TWIN WILD: The Cellar** – Grungy alt.rocking from Twin Wild, touring their new 'My Heart' EP after supports to You Me At Six and Nothing But Thieves.  
**MOVE: The Cellar** – UK bassline, garage and grime club night.  
**OLD ERNIE + BROWN GLOVE: The Wheatsheaf** – Atmospheric noise exploration from Old Ernie alongside Gemma Moss's dark cabaret band Brown Glove.  
**NO HORSES + JOHN BENNETT + DOMINIC WILKINSON DUO + STEVE OR SAM: The Harcourt Arms** – Blues rocking from No Horses, playing the songs of Muddy Waters, Charlie Musselwhite, The Allman Brothers and more.  
**JOHN OTWAY: The Cornerstone, Didcot** – The Clown Prince of Pop returns once again to the Shire. Expect all the hits, and non hits – 'Really Free', 'Beware of the Flowers Cause I'm Sure They're Going to Get You Yeah', 'Bunsen Burner' etc. One of a kind.  
**THE WIREBIRDS: Tap Social Movement, Botley** – Blues and rock covers.

### SUNDAY 28<sup>th</sup>

**COMMON PEOPLE: South Park** – Pete Tong's Heritage Orchestra bring the Ibiza hits to South Park – *see main preview*  
**SIMPLE with PEGGY GOU: The Bullingdon** – House, techno and electro club night with Korean-born, Berlin resident producer and selector Peggy Gou, rising star of electronic music, having just released her new EP on Ninja Tune's Technicolour imprint.  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Harcourt Arms**  
**SYN CITY ROCKERS: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon** – AC/DC and Thin Lizzy tribute.  
**THE VINCENT WHITE BAND: ROKEFEST, Benson (4pm)** – Blues rock in the style of Jeff Healey et al.  
**BLUES JAM: Fat Lil's, Witney (3pm)** – Open blues jam.

### MONDAY 29<sup>th</sup>

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Royal Blenheim**

### TUESDAY 30<sup>th</sup>

**BARS & MELODY + JOHNNY ORLANDO: O2 Academy** – Cuthbert Bars and Hector

Melody team up with the world's last living pirate of the high seas, Johnny Orlando, as they tour their new album, a grime remake of Throbbing Gristle's 'Second Annual Report'.  
**SPARK'S SIDE OF THE MOON: The Cellar**  
**Street Tavern**

### WEDNESDAY 31<sup>st</sup>

**LONDON GRAFFITTI + FASHION PROOF + STEEVO NOISSIER: The Wheatsheaf** – It's All About the Music bands showcase.  
**BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE: The Cellar** – 80s hits, glam, synth-pop and disco club night.

*Friday 19<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 21<sup>st</sup>*

## WOOD FESTIVAL: Braziers Park

Started in 2008 by brothers Robin and Joe Bennett in the wake of the floods that devastated Truck Festival in 2007, Oxford's pioneering eco-festival is still in a league of its own when it comes to genuine commitment to environmental responsibility – from the solar, wind, cycle and chip fat-powered sound systems, to the organic food and beer and compost toilets, WOOD refuses to just pay lip service to green concerns. This year's festival has been designated The Year of the hedgehog, continuing to focus on local wildlife, so feel free to dig out that spiky frock and get down to headliners **THE MAGIC NUMBERS**, whose harmony-driven 60s-styled pop headlines the weekend. Joining them are rough'n'ready roots ramblers **CC SMUGGLERS** with their old-time Texan folk and swing-inspired bluesy bluegrass; Edinburgh-born troubadour **BLUES ROSE CODE**; Cornwall's bluegrass, folk, country and pop quintet **FLATS & SHARPS**; Georgia's Americana songsmith **BRENT COBB**; indie folksters **WORRY DOLLS**; Gomez singer and guitarist **BEN OTTEWELL**, doing his bluesy roots solo thing; former Big Star drummer Jody Stephens' team-up with Freewheelers leader Luther Russell, **THESE PRETTY WRONGS**, plus a host of locally-sourced talent like genius songs-for-kids chap **NICK COPE**; trad folk singers **JACKIE OATES & MEGAN HENWOOD**; cello'n'loops maestro **DUOTONE**; expansive country-rockers **THE EPSTEIN**; kora master **JALI FILY CISSOKHO** and gorgeously downbeat electro duo **CANDY SAYS**. Add in the usual discos, workshops, and kids stuff and WOOD remains a festival steeped in the original spirit of Glastonbury and the free festivals of the 60s and beyond – no logos, no pretensions and no waste. Long may it flourish.



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*Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 28<sup>th</sup>*

**COMMON PEOPLE: South Park**

After last year’s successful inaugural event, which saw 15,000 enjoying a sun-baked South Park for a line-up topped by Duran Duran, Primal Scream, Public Enemy and Craig David, Common People makes a return trip, the two-day festival, organised by the team behind Bestival, once again twinned with Southampton for the weekend.

After last year’s heritage pop headliners, this year’s star names lean more towards dance and pop, with Jamaican dancehall star **SEAN PAUL** making a comeback and his Oxford debut having enjoyed global success through the noughties, with his multi-platinum, multi-award-winning 2002 album ‘Dutty Rock’ not only making him a household name but kickstarting a major dancehall revival with its influence still being felt. 2005 follow-up ‘The Trinity’ continued the success and if Paul’s been a less obvious face in recent years collaborations with the likes of Sia and Little Mix, and in particular Clean Bandit, whose hit ‘Rockabye’ he graced, have kept him at the top of the musical game.

Paul headlines the main stage on the Saturday and he’s joined by **GROOVE ARMADA** and **FOALS**, who both play DJ sets, keeping the overall dance vibe going. **WILD BEASTS** bring their funky ethereal electro-indie alongside **ST. ETIENNE**’s retro-futurist synth-pop and a double dose of classic Two Tone in the form of **THE SELECTER** and **THE BEAT**, revisiting timeless ska hits from ‘On My Radio’ and ‘Missing Words’ to ‘Mirror in the Bathroom’ and ‘Too Nice to Talk To’; anyone who says such songs aren’t exactly what summer festivals are made for is a fool.

The main stage line-up is completed by multi-million selling Scottish popster **AMY MCDONALD** plus our very own post-punk oddballs **LUCY LEAVE** whose unkempt, lopsided and utterly brilliant fusion of, well, whatever they find lying around, has made them Oxford’s most unlikely stars over the past year. Their place in the sun will last far longer than their opening set this weekend.

Moving onto Sunday and the headline act is **PETE TONG** with **THE HERITAGE ORCHESTRA**, conducted by Jules Buckley and playing an orchestral set of Ibiza club classics in what should be a spectacular finale to the weekend, a mass dance-along if not singalong climax.

Before that on the main stage will be excellent blues’n’soul singer (and renowned cat lover) **RAG’N’BONE MAN**, whose brace of BRIT Awards (for best British Breakthrough Act and Critics Choice), alongside a Number 1 debut album, ‘Human’, have made the former care worker possibly the most unlikely star of recent times, and a deserved one at that. There’s also former *The Voice* semi-finalist **BECKY HILL**; funtime – if not exactly family-friendly – cabaret rappers **THE CUBAN BROTHERS**, and quite probably the world’s only Elvis impersonator-fronted Nirvana tribute band, **ELVANA**. Today’s Oxford stars on a big stage are **COLDREDLIGHT**, whose darker shade of post-grunge blues, a midnight-shade mix of Mazzy Star, Alice in Chains and Ry Cooder, has had local music fans in raptures.

Away from the main stage, Common People offers a great mix of drum&bass, house, reggae and more as well as two full days of local music.

The Uncontained Stage on Saturday finds Bristol’s drum&bass, UK garage, grime and dubstep duo **MY NU-LENG** playing alongside a host of guests, including drum&bass legend **GOLDIE**, **NOVELIST** and **REDLIGHT**, while Sunday is a **MOXIE** takeover, the Rinse and Radio 1 DJ and tastemaker bringing her On

A Loop travelling club night to South Park with sets from **JOY ORBISON**; **MIDLAND**; **CORNEL KOVACS**, and **FELIX DICKINSON**. Beyond this there’s myriad DJ sets from the likes of **SHEPDOG**; **COUNT SKYLARKIN**; **KERRY & CASIO** vs **HARVEY K-TEL**; **PEEPSHOW PADDY** and **HOUSEWURK**, among others.

The Uncommon Stage is once again hosted by your friendly neighbourhood *Nightshift*, with 20 local acts representing The Shire. Saturday is headed by this month’s cover stars **ZAIA**, who are joined by Balkan folk, ska and indie fusion partystarters **THE BALKAN WANDERERS**; sci-fi voodoo blues duo **VIENNA DITTO**; melodic stadium-pop stars **LEADER**; a joint set from folkstress **JESS HALL** and loops’n’cello maestro **DUOTONE**; 60s r’n’b and new wave storytellers **THE SHAPES**; long-time local folk-rock and alt.country heroes **THE EPSTEIN**; darkwoods indie-folksters **LITTLE RED**; psychedelic acid-surf weirdoes **THE PINK DIAMOND REVUE**, and popstastic garage-rock duo **THE OTHER DRAMAS**.

Sunday sees a very welcome return to Oxford for **SHAADOW**, the much-travelled rapper who made his name on the local scene and is a seasoned festival star, having packed out tents at Truck and beyond. Joining him will be fast-rising epic indie rockers **KANADIA**; tripped-out hip hop and electro crew **DEATH OF HI-FI**; inventive rhyme master **RHYMESKEEMZ**; stoner-blues behemoths **DESERT STORM**; ethereal electro-pop starlets **LOW ISLAND**; a medley of acts of all styles from **THE YOUNG WOMEN’S MUSIC PROJECT**; funky jazzy-inflected electro-pop from **CATGOD**, and a double dose of proper guitar noise and serious beats to get the day awake from grungers **SLATE HEARTS** and bluesy garage rockers **CHEROKII**.

As with any event organised by Bestival, Common People places an emphasis on variety, so beyond the live music stages and DJs, there’s all manner of stuff going on, from circus and funfair stuff to street jazz. If last year’s success can be built on, hopefully it will become a permanent fixture in the local calendar – the city centre festival Oxford has always deserved.

Tickets and info: [oxford.commonpeople.net](http://oxford.commonpeople.net)



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**THE MOONLANDINGZ / ALEX SHEBLEY / COLDREDLIGHT**

**The Bullingdon**

The night starts normally enough, as if Coldredlight can ever be described as normal. Their ever-changing line-up now features a guitarist and bass player who seem to have been recruited on the basis they look exactly like drummer Caspar Miles from a distance. As a four-piece the band lean towards the grungier side of their blues sound, at their best when sculpturing jagged shapes out of bitter, balletic songs like 'Orpheus'.

Alex Shebley is mates with The Moonlandingz and they've insisted he gets his turn onstage. His self-consciously ironic hipster take on mumbled 80s karaoke might be vaguely amusing for one song, and we're convinced he's just there to herald the main attraction onstage. But he goes

on. And on. And on. It's partway between LL Cool J piss-take and local commercial radio ad jingle and, frankly, it's utter fucking shit, a crap joke taken way too far. If this were Glasgow or Newcastle rather than bookish little Oxford he'd have been lynched long before he ambles offstage. Then something approaching all hell breaks loose. Lias Saoudi, last seen on the Bully's stage stripped naked and covered in baby oil and flour with The Fat White Family, emerges topless and spindly, his face painted into a grotesque approximation of a boot polish beard-cum-gasmask, slices of bread clingfilmed to his torso, the band kicking out a Glitter Band stomp as reimagined by Throbbing Gristle, guitars and synths becoming a cacophonous skree as Saoudi

unleashes his inner Gibby Haynes, a wiry dervish of a performer. Everything lurches into pulsing gothic rockabilly, Suicide meets The Cramps, only taking a break for recent single 'Strangle of Anna', a bleak inversion of some lost Lee Hazelwood and Nancy Sinatra duet, or perhaps a demonic vision of how The B52s might have turned out if they'd replaced all that jollity with a bag of smack and misanthropy. There are moments when the band's innate sense of chaos threatens to tip the set into directionless garage thrash, but then we get lean electro-pop and no wave noise in one, or dark, ugly blues on 'IDS', the set eventually burning up in a euphoric climax and a frantic moshpit, the capacity crowd left with the buzz that while The Moonlandingz will always exist on music's gutter level, they're bringing genuine excitement to live music and Lias Saoudi is possibly the finest frontman of his generation.

*Dale Kattack*

**GOLDFRAPP**

**O2 Academy**

Goldfrapp are not a band of extremes. The velvety comfort of their pulsing, trippy electro dance beats, overlaid by Alison Goldfrapp's sensuous and silky voice, is tightly controlled; they never give too much away. This restraint is also apparent live; Alison first appears backlit, and we don't really get a good view of her for a few tracks; in fact, I can't see the full four-piece backing band until about half way through. Tonight is basically a showcase for Goldfrapp's most recent album, 'Silver Eye' – their seventh. 'Ocean' is a gorgeous reverby Depeche Mode-esque stomp, and 'Moon in Your Mouth' is a sumptuous juxtaposition of ethereal chords and a muffled, primitive-sounding drum machine, but the highlight is 'Become the One', a charmingly repetitive and hypnotic chugging number about becoming the one you know you are – or something; it doesn't really matter, because Alison's voice, as essential as the synths and beats are to

Goldfrapp's sound, has taken me away to somewhere warm and fuzzy. The subject of the songs is very often at odds with its upbeat tone; for example, they start with 'Utopia', about genetic engineering, and finish with 'Strict Machine', about lab rats, but they are communicated by lyrics sung so mellifluously and breathily that you can be forgiven for being swept away by the beauty of the song rather than the despair it forewarns. I know I should pay more attention – I had been humming 'Strict Machine' to myself for a good fifteen years before I found out what it was about – but it's hard not to miss the point entirely. The new material played tonight proves that there's enough variation in Goldfrapp's formula for their output to be easily ascribable but not bore their fans, and that's all you can ask for, really.

*Kirsten Etheridge*







## DEATH OF THE MAIDEN / CANDY SAYS / CATGOD The Cellar

The description “ambient electro-jazz” should strike fear into any sane person but Catgod somehow manage to carry it off. If their excellent debut album earlier this year featured an expansive cast of musicians and singers tonight sees the band – formed around ex-Neverlnd guitarists Robin Christensen-Marriott and Henry Soothill – stripped down to a trio, which means we get moments of uncertainty early on, but the three-way harmonies bring each song to life, at one point sounding like a bizarre mash-up of Opus III and Manhattan Transfer, before they properly hit a groove, get funkier, edge almost into afro-pop and create

an undulating ambience from which Robin’s sister Cat’s voice emerges as the defining element. After an extended hiatus other than scoring the film *Burn, Burn, Burn*, Candy Says return to action, reduced to a duo, having dispensed with all their old songs. Bad news? Not a bit of it. It takes about ten seconds for Julia Walker to remind us she’s possibly the best singer in Oxford, a magnificent balance of strength and vulnerability, and as she and husband Ben nestle into a short set of downbeat, atmospheric electronic pop they reveal themselves as something new and genuinely wonderful, Julia’s voice soaring effortlessly over Ben’s

beds of woozy synthetic whirrs and clicks, at one point sounding like Sinead O’Connor if she’d grown up listening to Grimes. ‘Butterflies’ is a stark, hymnal ode to a former Colombian presidential candidate, but it’s ‘Whatever Comes’, equal parts desolate and hopeful, that proves to be the highlight of a set that is, quite simply, stunning. Following that seems an impossible task but in Tamara Parsons-Baker Death of the Maiden have one of the few local singers who can match Julia Walker. Like Julia her voice reveals a shifting war between harrowing, emotional turmoil and steely defiance, the power behind opening number ‘Soldier’ allowing

the band to flex their musical muscle, tonight fortified by stand-in drummer Zahra Tehrani, whose tom-heavy style perfectly augments Death of the Maiden’s dark moods. When Tamara sings you sometimes feel you’re entering a very personal emotional hell, such is the raw honesty of her lyrics, while her voice can dance like Cait O’Riordan or strike out like Patti Smith – notably on the bluesy ‘You’re So Fucked’. They finish on a turbulent high with ‘Tess’, a wracked, defiant shanty that could go toe to toe with Jacques Brel’s ‘Amsterdam’ and if you emerge from a Death of the Maiden show feeling bruised and scarred, it’s a journey into the very darkest night of the soul that’s worth taking again and again. **Dale Kattack**

undergone changes); the records have a solid groove but decent tunes are a little thin on the ground, and they’re best experienced live. While this is all hard to challenge, they’re also a puzzle you can never quite solve. The songs consist mainly of intricate guitar and bass interplay over rock-solid drum motifs, with complex harmonies, often employing all four members, creating a mesmerising, hypnotic experience. They’ve spoken of admiring UK bands like Wire, who must sound quite exotic if you live in LA, and the band are much more popular here than at home. Their dancing is an essential part of the experience; each member has a distinct expressive style, again seeming to offer clues to what’s going on in the songs while adding to the mystery. ‘New Song’ bucks the trend as a straightforward catchy pop tune, but there’s often more satisfaction to be gleaned from the denser, less accessible numbers. What could be really fun would be letting Ricardo Villalobos loose to create one of his forty minute remixes, but that would surely bring us no closer to understanding the essence of this unique band. **Art Lagun**

## SONIC BOOM SIX / BLACK CANDY / JACK LITTLE O2 Academy

While Sonic Boom Six singer Laila Khan prowls the stage as tonight’s headliners dive headlong into ‘Virus’, after heeding the audience’s calls for its inclusion, the final song of a blistering set, Jack Little opens the evening on an altogether different note. A lone man on stage; acoustic guitar in hand, his cautionary tales evoke Frank Turner and, dare we say it, Ed Sheeran. Despite that seemingly backhanded praise, the local singer is one to watch. Reformed veterans of the Oxford metal scene, Black Candy are as far removed from Jack’s tender tones as one could possibly get. Time certainly hasn’t lessened their thirst for a meaty riff melded with infectious rapping. Singer Joe Hill cracks jokes between songs before returning to his role of a compelling frontman. Rage Against The Machine will always be a reference point, while late-90s Londoners Sona Fariq are in the right ball park too. ‘Downfall’, Black Candy’s ‘could have been huge’ moment really does show why they were so revered back in the day. After previous support slots here, Sonic Boom Six headlining the O2 is long overdue. Bursting onto the Manchester underground punk scene in 2002, over the last fifteen years they’ve crafted five albums of punk-

ska-rock-pop masterpieces. And that’s no hyperbole on my part. Last year’s PledgeMusic release ‘The F-Bomb’ leaned more towards ska-pop than their previous self-titled punk-rock album. Whichever genre they embrace (mashing them together more often than not) the political content is always paramount. Though Laila has gone down as saying she’s happy for people to just dig the rhythm of the music and dance, as opposed to drawing from the many relevant lyrics, a combination of these elements enhances the impact of the live experience. Dropped early in the set, ‘For the Kids of the Multiculture’’s theme couldn’t be more fitting what with Brexit, and Cowley Road’s diverse population being so prominent. ‘No Man No Right’, lifted from ‘The F-Bomb’, unites everyone on the subject of showing respect to women. Rapper Barney trades bars with Laila, on ‘Bigger Than Punk Rock’, their calling card and message of musical genres splicing together. The set’s most laidback moment comes in the form of the bittersweet homage to their home town Manchester, ‘Sunny Side Of The Street’, which is simply gorgeous. Sonic Boom Six then; not just a band but a philosophy and way of life. **Gary Davidson**

## AMERICAN AQUARIUM The Bullingdon

“This is a song about shit not working out,” announces American Aquarium singer BJ Barham ahead of another song about sorrow and regret. “If you like songs about shit not working out we have seven albums of them on sale over there.” Just one of a score self-deprecating moments of dry wit from the North Carolina singer across two hours of anecdotal hilarity and lyrical desolation tonight. Barham is a consummate performer, and so he should be: he’s been dragging his band around the American bar circuit for over a decade now (“300 gigs a year, mostly to no-one,” he observes) with little or no recognition, and even less commercial success, until now. Back in 2012 the band decided to release one more album then call it a day; musical glory was not to be their story. Except the album in question, ‘Burn. Flicker. Die’, which recounted in raw, emotive terms, just what it is to fail and fail again, was so well received it catapulted American Aquarium into a spotlight they’d only previously dreamed off. Calling it a day was postponed. The album’s follow-up, ‘Wolves’, was even better, and here they are, touring across Europe, playing to a crowd who hang on Barham’s every word. His words are worth hanging on to. Delivered in a low, rich voice not a million miles from Steve Earle, he sings of people and places the American dream never touched. Like his grandfather, who fought in the Pacific in WWII only to end up slaving on a cigarette production line for 40 years

until he died a bitter, broken man (‘The American Tobacco Company’). Most songs are more personal, Barham exposing a life of personal failings over unstrained rootsy country rock, bluegrass and occasional skiffle, declaring “Everything I loved I lost / Everything I lost, I had an excuse,” recounting the years when he and the band, all tattoos and plaid shirts, played and partied and went round in ever decreasing circles. Set opener ‘Man I’m Supposed To Be’ balances all that regret and self doubt on a gorgeously heartbroken pedal-steel lullaby, before promising, “That was the most cheerful song we’re gonna play all night,” to cheers and laughter. He’s not wrong though, and his solo acoustic segment partway through the set, which takes everything down several notches more, provides a stark, powerful high point of an exceptional show. Away from such heartbreak though he’s joking about jellied eels and his enduring embarrassment of not having a proper job, even though the years of hard slog have brought him more contentment than any 9-5 could. “I might never be a millionaire but that’s alright by me / Because I’ve done things I wanted to and said the things I needed to and seen the things I wanted to see” sings Barham on the autobiographical ‘Losing Side of 25’, and it sums up American Aquarium’s heroic story. The good guys won in the end. Here’s hoping they keep on winning. **Dale Kattack**

## A RELUCTANT ARROW / SELF HELP / SAMUEL EDWARDS

The Wheatsheaf Tonight is Gappy Tooth Industries’ 175<sup>th</sup> show. Nearly fifteen years of the monthly music club picking up rough diamonds from the local dirt and letting them sparkle on stage. With a no-show from Coventry’s Deathsex Bloodbath, it was left for Samuel Edwards to come off the bench, his previous serviceable acoustic set now rewired for some serious transubstantiation from a Novation station. He’s halfway there, walking the line between lounge player and Soft Cell. There’s a bit of Pet Shop Boys on ‘One Step Ahead’ and another song that’s a close cousin to Tears For Fears’ ‘Mad World’; there is gaucheness and enthusiasm a go go, though his occasional Future Island-like dad dance moves could find him up against the wall and shot come the revolution. Formerly known as the Din Twins before adding bassist Lizzie Couves to their line-up, Self Help have, in shaggy haired front man Daniel Jefferies, someone of real charisma that you immediately warm to and want to watch. In songs like ‘Won’t You’ and ‘Gooley’ they crank out a wacky garage pop of the highest lo-fi calibre, as if Plastic Bertrand and Jilted John had a love child that was brought up by The Modern Lovers. At the end they do a corking ‘Roll Over Beethoven’ to mark the passing of Chuck Berry and suddenly you realise we haven’t really come that far at all. There’s an initial temptation to expect more from Reluctant Arrow with all the talent on stage, bassist Shan Sriharan, fresh from his vibrant Moogiemani, and guitarist Wilbur Sears and singer Claire Le Masters tripping over each other’s music degrees. With such a formal and classical sounding voice they find it difficult not to stray into tepid female-fronted pub rock territory, but sticking with it you sense an off-kilter re-tilling of the whole of power folk-rock underway, and by the time you get to the lupine chorus of ‘Howl’ it’s as if Imelda May is fronting Al Kooper’s Blood Sweat & Tears in one of those cheese dreams where everything seems normal but is absolutely not normal after you wake up. Maybe it’s a new genre: cheese dream music. After all, Gappy Tooth Industries continue to do more than most to create a genre-free zone for that sort of febrile and entertaining *In Vivo* to come about. **Paul Carrera**

## HARCOURT ARMS

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THE WAILERS

O2 Academy

“It’s the Wailers, Jim, but not as we know it!” That was the thought in our mind, the last few times we’ve seen them. It was sometimes hard to shake the notion that we were watching a covers band. This idea was reinforced because these songs are so deeply familiar – and well covered – and that whoever was ‘Bob’ (and there’s been a few

‘Bobs’ even though there will, of course only ever really be one Bob Marley) deemed it necessary to do a Bob impression. There have been numerous personal changes (including a mass...er...exodus to the ‘Original’ Wailers at one point) but tonight the band is as authentic as it’s going to get without any

metaphysical tomfoolery (or finally getting Bunny Wailer to re-join). Guitarist Junior Marvin (who steps in for vocals on the Peter Tosh lines in ‘Get Up Stand Up’), lead Donald Kinsey and keyboardist Tyrone Downey all played with Bob as did the bassist (who Marley poached from Lee Scratch Perry’s Upsetters during recording). Aston ‘Family

Man’ Barrett – he of the timeless basslines, who remains seated throughout, impenetrably cool, shades on and next to a Lion of Judah flag – is well named. It is his son, Carlton Jnr, on the drums, and cousin Josh Barrett on vox. Even though the dreadlocked frontman lapses into the occasional Bobism, he is a veritable dynamo, propelling this band of honed roots specialists forward.

When they hit their stride it’s clear why they are still one of the longest running, tightest and most powerful live reggae experiences since the inception of the genre in the mid 60s. They stick fairly closely to the blueprints of their creations. However, they are at their most interesting and engaging when they branch out, as they do when recreating an early ska tune, or dropping into a dubby midsection during ‘Exodus’.

Some more risks would have been welcome (and they play only one new track, a slightly formulaic Rasta hymn to the downfall of Babylon), but they know what most people are here for, and that is to see them do ‘Legend’, which contains all their hits. The biggest selling reggae album ever (over 30 million) it represents the first exposure of reggae to many an impressionable wee scallywag. If it ain’t broke, why try to fix it?

Leo Bowder

FEEDER

O2 Academy

I first saw Feeder in 2001, when they had already produced three albums, including 2001’s breakthrough ‘Echo Park’, featuring alternative lad anthems for the guitar band-oriented consumer looking for something slightly edgier than Oasis and co. Compared to Smashing Pumpkins, The Pixies and even Nirvana, they provided accessible rock for audiences around the UK, supported by the flurry of guitar bands of the time such as My Vitriol and Ash. This month they return from a four year hiatus with album number nine, ‘All Bright Electric’. Tonight’s set is for the nineties/noughties supporters though, with favourites like ‘High’, ‘Shatter’ and ‘Just the Way I’m Feeling’ taking pride of place in the set list, much to the delight of the crowd. One inebriated lady is enjoying it so much, she opts to urinate in the corner of the O2 Academy, rather than queue for the loo. Make of that what you will. The band’s extensive back catalogue has no fillers, with ‘Lost & Found’ and ‘Insomnia’ going down a storm and of course, ‘Just a Day’ and ‘Buck Rogers’ instantly

recognisable. Given that I last saw them sixteen years ago, they sound just as charged now as they did back then. The consistently strong songwriting is what really sets them apart from contemporaries like Stereophonics and Athlete. Songs like ‘Feeling a Moment’ are head and shoulders above the likes of Snow Patrol and Coldplay in terms of authentic songsmithery and lowest possible cheese factor. New song ‘Infrared-Ultraviolet’ is less four-chord anthem and more ambitious, layered piano experiment, with light touches of Thom Yorke. The keyboard player’s strong backing vocals overpower Grant Nicholas for most of the track though, briefly bringing a different vibe to the show. New single ‘Paperweight’, brings us right back into familiar territory, and wouldn’t be out of place on 1997 album ‘Polythene’ with its play-along guitar lines and hard edges. It’s a strong return for arguably one of the UK’s best guitar bands amidst a plethora of EDM and auto-tuned pop; long may it continue. Karlyn King

LAETITIA SADIER SOURCE ENSEMBLE

The Bullingdon

Laetitia Sadier: proper avant-garde pop royalty, Stereolab’s goddess of Gallic loungecore. And here she is, back at the Bullingdon. In terms of small venue hero worship, it’s right up there with the time we saw Babes in Toyland legend Kat Bjelland necking red wine out of the bottle at this very bar, albeit somewhat more refined in approach. Sadier’s latest venture, the Source Ensemble, is one of those glorious bands who look as if they’ve just met during soundcheck, but play like they’ve been together for ten years. As well as providing three-way backing vocals, they flit between samplers, synths, drums and undefined effects units mid-song, displaying an inventive spirit that sets the band up as a fine exploratory accompaniment to Sadier’s velvet tones. If you’ve ever heard Monade, or any of Sadier’s other solo work, there is little that will come as a surprise here. The songs flit from the louche exotica of late-period Stereolab (‘Reflectors’ could have

been lifted straight from ‘Chemical Chords’), wide-eyed ingénues of songs that somehow manage effortless sophistication at the same time, through to wondrous synth-powered Radiophonic Workshop burblings like ‘Committed’. She may well sing that “like so many other things, love has to be reinvented”, but her musical template is flexible enough to remain interesting without any need for reinvention itself. But it’s a slow burner. Much like new album ‘Find Me Finding You’, the set’s charm reveals itself slowly and coily, starting off as an interesting but somewhat lightweight diversion with ‘Undying Love For Humanity’ but filling the room with life-affirming joy 45 minutes later with ‘The Woman With The Invisible Necklace’. By the end, all that’s missing is a ten-minute run-through of ‘Golden Ball’, you know, just for old time’s sake. But then you can’t really heckle royalty, can you? Stuart Fowkes

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## THE JESUS & MARY CHAIN

### O2 Academy

Jagger hangs out with royalty; Lydon advertises butter and Iggy sells car insurance. It seems those rock and roll rebels who don't die young are destined to become cuddly caricatures. So what of the 1980s' great noise-pop iconoclasts, The Jesus & Mary Chain? Here was a band fired by disgust for the safe

sterility of that era's pop, fuelled by The Velvet Underground's art-noise, whose gigs routinely degenerated into riots and who eventually split amid sibling rivalry to make the Gallaghers looks like a pair of Waltons kids. Has their nihilism simply become more grist for rock music's nostalgia wheel, or does a

fire still burn? When Jim Reid howls "I wanna die on a bed of spikes" on 'Reverence', does he still mean it, or is he just like Roger Daltrey before him, croaking out "I hope I die before I get too old" well into middle age? Tonight's show is the Mary Chain's first ever visit to Oxford, so it's

no surprise the venue is packed, the atmosphere one of genuine excitement and anticipation, the occasion made just that bit more special by the inclusion of Oxford boy Mark Crozer on bass for the band. They kick in with recent single 'Amputation' from 'Damage & Joy', their first album in almost 20 years, and we can't help think it sounds like a poor man's Dandy Warhols. But then they follow it with the honey-dipped melancholy of 'April Skies' and the brooding melodic malevolence of 'Head On' and suddenly it seems like any misgivings are out the window in much the same way speaker stacks used to be at those early shows.

That old chainsaw guitar buzz is still there, the Reid brothers remain a sullen presence on stage, shrouded in dark lights, but what quickly becomes abundantly clear is the thing that was often overlooked in the more excitable reviews of the band – they have a whole arsenal of superb songs. The new album only gets a cursory airing tonight , while we get five tracks from 1985's classic debut 'Psychocandy', including a peerless 'You Trip Me Up' and a glowering, drawled 'A Taste of Cindy', the feedback tempered a little, the songs' core melodies to the fore.

Interestingly – and maybe encouragingly – new songs like 'Always Sad' get as enthusiastic a reception as the old numbers, and if nostalgia is the dominant force at work, there's little by way of complacency, and when you have songs as great as The Jesus & Mary Chain have, it's nostalgia worth indulging in. They no longer want to burn everything to the ground but there is a fire here that still burns.

*Dale Kattack*

intensity of the performers and the laidbackness of the listeners, particularly those who adopt a horizontal position. Having, through music, been put in touch with our inner circadian rhythms, the next evening at The Holywell we experience pre-recorded radio waves from the far reaches of our galaxy and beyond, generating sounds in 'Pulsars', the first piece on the bill, followed by an impressively virtuosic clarinet duo from Berlin who are equally at ease in a long piece with a dark edge influenced by Morten Feldman, as in their ironic three-minute take on pop music. There are extraordinary long notes, extraordinary high notes and effects that had you looking for the electronica they must be using. There isn't any, just them and their clarinets. The night's final performance, 'Somewhere a Field', is a soundscape of fields in rural Devon performed by eight players. They start with silence before coming in one by one, plucking, jiggling, breathing through, but not conventionally playing, their instruments, to hit different frequencies. This sort of thing can become terminally boring but this is highly evocative, particularly of the river which surrounds three sides of the fields. From the many other events on offer, we try a sound walk were you are requested to feedback your experience of attempting to capture sound with your body, an approach which has been around for thirty years apparently but we find baffling. Visiting the various installations at OVADA is much more fun, despite the magnificent looking Audiograft jukebox box not functioning. Our favourite is 'Test Tone', not so much for its 1000hz frequency sound but because this is created by role reversal: a record player revolving around static vinyl and is the sort of creativity that is Audiograft at its best.

*Colin May*

## HAPPYNES / HER'S

### The Cellar

Comprised of a guitarist/singer, a drum machine, and possibly the world's most rambunctious bassist, Liverpool's Her's open the night with a set of dreamy pop songs, seemingly as much influenced by the current wave of decidedly chilled-out indie bands as they are by Drake's 'Hotline Bling'. From the driving, bass-led 'Dorothy' to the tropical 'Marcel', the guitars chime like The Smiths, singer Stephen Fitzpatrick croons and mumbles like a combination of Julian Casablancas and Mac Demarco, and by the time they're done you can't help be won over by their catchy tunes and affable stage presence, drum machine malfunctions and all. Happyness are an interesting prospect on paper; the young London band have repeatedly been compared to the most revered American indie bands of the 90s (even going so far as to sing in American accents), although a series of glowing endorsement makes us fear that we're about to witness another band soon to be shat out the arse-end of the *NME* hype machine. However, from the moment they kick off their set with a blistering rendition of 'Anna, Lisa Calls' from

their recently released second record 'Write In', Happyness clearly mean business. The 90s influences are peppered throughout their set, with gloriously wonky lead guitar parts belying some solid songwriting based on a heavy foundation of Wilco and Teenage Fanclub. The joyous 'It's On You' sounds like a lost Pavement single, while 'Naked Patients' – with its motorik rhythm, bass and ambience – recalls vintage Yo La Tengo. It's not all bombast though, and it's in some of the quieter moments that Happyness really shine, from the lush piano ballad 'Through Windows', the serene 'Montreal Rock Band Somewhere', to the tender encore of 'Weird Little Birthday Girl', a song which channels the intimate spirit of Mark Linkous. Something about their affected disinterest on stage smacks of a band that's too-cool-for-school, or perhaps it's just genuine awkwardness, but with a second album that shows signs of a band outgrowing their influences and coming into their own, tonight is an affirmation that the slackers are back to win hearts and minds, one hook at a time.

*Tom McKibbin*

## DJ DEREK SWEET MEMORY

### SOUNDS

### The Bullingdon

It is around a year since the mortal remains of DJ Derek were discovered in a wood near his home in Bristol, after many months of anguished searching and false sightings, but his spirit is very much in evidence at the Bullingdon, here in Oxford, where he was a regular visitor.

We had the good fortune to interview him at one of his beloved Wetherspoons pubs (legend has it he visited each one in the UK at least once) and was struck by his sense of fun. He would have approved of the festive nature of this event, and the goodly number of youngsters in attendance. He was a fan of the yoots – in the best possible way – and they were fans of his. Tonight is very much a joint effort. Count Skylarkin' is in his traditional compere role, and the night opens with DJ/producer Wrongtom with a very upbeat hiphop/banghra/reggae/ragga set. In fact, his latest album features the Ragga Twins, he's previously worked with Roots Mavuva and Deemas Jay, which feature in the set, as does his reggae version of hyperactive junglist General Levy's 'Incredible'. His slot is a real mash up extravaganza. In fact, eclecticism is very much the

flavour of the night; he is followed by genre-bending Bristolians Laid Blak (with a brand new album; the well named 'About Time') who are a welcome addition to the DJs, with their live reggae vibe, followed by Don Letts. The original rebel dread himself, superstar DJ Letts has had long and varied career, from introducing the punks to reggae as a selector in the Roxy club, to making films with The Clash, setting up Big Audio Dynamite with Mick Jones and selling weed to Bob Marley (Don visibly squirms when compere Aidan reminsus of this). Letts has long since been made welcome by The Establishment with a regular BBC radio program. He clearly still has his finger on the musical pulse. His quirky set takes in many a version excursion, including a ska reimagining of Batman's theme, Dubmatix's 'Is this Love?' and a Japanese reggae version of a Michael Jackson track, plus some dub reggae and its annoying, little mutant cousin dubstep. Finally Count Skylarkin' takes to the decks for a set of old and new classics with some of Derek's favourites thrown in. A sweet and funky memorial for a true one off.

*Leo Bowlder*

# THE CELLAR

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7.30pm – 10.00pm • £6 adv • 16+

Thurs 4th  
**GLUE**  
*Techno / Electro / House*  
11pm – 3am

Fri 5th  
**BOSSAPHONIK GRUPO X (LIVE!) + RESIDENT DJ DAN OFER**  
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Sat 6th  
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Sat 6th  
**FREERANGE**  
*UKG / Grime / Bassline*  
11pm – 3am • £5

Sun 7th  
**AGMP DR. ROBERT + MATT DEIGHTON**  
7pm • £13.75 adv

Mon 8th  
**FUTURE PERFECT SAM BROOKES + GUEST**  
7.30pm • £8 adv • 16+

Tues 9th  
**INTRUSION**  
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Wed 10th  
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7.30pm • £6 adv  
£8 otd • 16+

Wed 10th  
**ISIS**  
*Acid House*  
11pm – 3am • £5

Thurs 11th  
**FOOTNOTE JON K**  
*Disco / House / Techno*  
11pm – 3am  
£6 Adv • £7 otd

Fri 12th  
**MJR GROUP TOM WALKER + GUESTS**  
7.00pm • £8 adv • £9 otd • 16+

Fri 12th  
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Sat 13th  
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*House*  
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Tues 16th  
**MAMA FEELGOOD'S RESIDENT DJs**  
11pm – 3am • £5 otd

Wed 17th  
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10pm – 3am • £3 • £5

Thurs 18th  
**AGMP DJ FORMAT & ABDOMINAL + TOO MANY T'S**  
7pm – 10.30pm • £12.50 adv

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11pm – 3am  
£5 all night

Fri 19th  
**BRICKWORK LIZARDS + CLARK WISEMAN**  
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PINS

The Bullingdon

When PINS last played the Bully in 2016, it wasn’t half as busy as this. Tonight, the room is packed

with young girls and plenty of older gents. Since that last gig, the band have released ‘Aggrophobe’,

featuring Mr Iggy Pop; major kudos. They open with that track tonight, with bassist Anna Donigan filling in

for Iggy on the spoken word. The band convey a real air of mystery; film noir meets Warhol’s Factory, with lead singer Faith Holgate like a reincarnated Edie Sedgewick crossed with Siouxi Sioux, prowling around the stage, much to the delight of the girls in the front row.

The most vital thing about PINS is their confidence; they’ve come a long way since 2011, and they know it. Stand out tracks tonight include ‘Molly’, with Holgate channelling a cat-like presence and Nico in abundance. ‘Young Girls’ could easily be on a Yeah Yeah Yeahs album whereas ‘All Hail’ is closer to recent Sleater Kinney efforts, a band that PINS have toured with. ‘Trouble’ is the song the older gents in the audience are waiting for, with Holgate unafraid to show a more sensual side to the band, something that a lot of all female bands are afraid of, in a misguided effort to be taken seriously. A cover of Joy Division’s ‘Dead Souls’ is a real surprise, albeit a good one, with synths and chorus effects aplenty. A bold choice that they carry off really well. This is a band who have toured relentlessly to get to this level and exert full control over their releases via self-founded label Haus of PINS. They definitely translate much stronger live than on record, and the encore is well received, with ‘Dazed by You’ bringing a jangly Best Coast vibe, completely devoid of their Manchester roots.

With Iggy already a fan, it will be interesting to see how far PINS can go, amidst the generic shallower pond of guitar bands in the UK today.

Karlyn King

PULLED APART BY HORSES

O2 Academy

Somewhat unexpectedly, we find ourselves with one foot planted in rock’s hoary past tonight, as Pulled Apart By Horses’ new album ‘The Haze’ takes a firm step into the 70s, to a time before rock twisted itself into fractured and angular shapes, when all that mattered was how fat your riffs were, and possibly how much corduroy you could get away with wearing at once. From the band’s new 13<sup>th</sup> Floor Elevators-style logo to a liberal spattering of spring reverb and a run-through of ‘Helter Skelter’, their latest iteration is less aggressive and altogether groovier, their inner Led Zep married to pure Queens of the Stone Age rhythmic stomp. As for the show, it’s unfortunate that sometimes when a band is just too damn good at what they do, they can make a rod for their own back. By setting the gold standard for what any self-respecting rock band’s live performance should look like, they’re compelled to

maintain a stupidly high level of ROCK ANTICS at all times. So it is admittedly slightly unfair that when a ring rusty tour-opening performance isn’t a ‘flames are shooting out of my eyes’ best-show-ever, a great show by anyone else’s standards actually feels quite unremarkable. Less sharp than usual, the band aren’t helped by a subdued and sleepy Monday night crowd, and a handful of new songs lack a little live polish, giving parts of the night that woolly feeling of shaking off a hangover. Luckily, the likes of ‘V.E.N.O.M.’ and ‘I Punched a Lion in the Throat’ have lost none of their bite (sorry), and their regular ace card of flinging themselves headlong into the audience during ‘High Five, Swan Dive, Nose Dive’ pulls it around at the death. They never really looked all that comfortable with stage barriers anyway. Stuart Fowkes

TRUDY AND THE ROMANCE

The Cellar

As Victor Frankenstein hacked the limbs and extremities off countless corpses, he must have at one stage thought “Yes, I can do this... but should I?” Although theoretically very possible, does that necessitate the plan being brought to fruition? Trudy & the Romance may perhaps have had the very same conversation, their coarsely sewn together creature comprising of the brain of bebop, limbs of alt rock and torso of a postmodern barber shop quartet. The answer at present is a unanimous maybe. At times, Trudy truly make this unholy union sing like the most beauteous of fat and sexless castratos and you feel they have absolutely found a niche that is well worth a full cavity search. The rapid pace of their music allows their multi-genre methodology to breathe and the audience is carried along for the ride in a throng of tasteful arpeggios and rigid rhythm section work. The untamed, abrasive nature of lead man Oliver Taylor’s delivery adds to the

frenetic energy the band create and the evening’s entertainment has a lilt and a swing to it which keeps things ticking over momentum wise. However, their harmonies – a vital component of such a style – are painfully, unskilfully sung, feeling more like Millwall fans attempting an a cappella version of ‘Moon River’ than anything authentically musical. The ability to nail these without sounding like a drunk and disorientated sperm whale will be the band’s make or break from a live performance perspective. All in all there’s a hell of a lot to be positive about and one can only hope that Trudy & the Romance continue along their obscure and unfamiliar pathway as it is very much worth exploring. Perhaps though, time in the practice room should outweigh time on the road for fear of this band going the way of most romances and ending with an incoherent tangle of hopes, dreams and a total loss of identity. Richard Brabin

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**Dr SHOTOVER: Grime Suspect**

Ah, there you are. Welcome to the East Indies Club bar, where happy thoughts are king. Pull up a pew and get some drinks in, Spillers, but do not attempt to join in with the big kids' chat until you have been a member for two years and bought exactly 2,000 rounds. Mine's a pint of crème de menthe with a Star Bar and a Caramac on the side, by the way. Now, where had the rest of us got to? Ah yes, discussing the latest telly programmes. My personal favourite is *Primal Scream 1973*, popular prequel to iconic 1990s-set dance-rock detective drama *Morse-adelica*. In it PC Bobby Gillespie learns his trade on the rough, drug-filled estates of Glasgow and Manchester, uncovering some dark police secrets along the way... like, uh, they're all TOTALLY CORRUPT [*weezy laugh*]. Obviously the writers make much of the fact that the hero is a Police Constable called *hnyuk, hnyuk* 'Bobby'. And – just as obviously – the soundtrack is full of T.Rex, Slade, Bowie and um, Lieutenant Pigeon. In fact the sequence featuring *Mouldy Old Dough*, as PC Bobby finds a suitcase of dodgy cash left for one of his colleagues in a skip round the back of a bookie's, is probably one of the most critically praised in the series. It's not long before our hero has gone undercover and joined a Rolling Stones tribute band, called, yes, you guessed it, Primal Scream. Series One of *Primal Scream 1973* ends with a massive slo-mo explosion intercut with footage of the band rehearsing their Stones homage *Rocks*, as PC Bobby struggles with an agonizing decision: should he or should he not arrest his colleague and main squeeze WPC 'Ginger' McGee for drugs-related corruption offences? Or just drop some MDMA and discover indie dance music? What a choice, PC Bobby, what a choice. Next month: *Me and Bobby McGee*



PC PLODD: “‘Elo, ‘ello, ‘ello... which one of you long-‘aired student dropouts is undercover agent PC Bobby Gillespie?”

ALL: “Got any spare drugs, officer?”

PC PLODD [chuckling]: “You young rascals... next you’ll be telling me you just wanna be free to do what you wanna do!”

[Synth-y trumpet-y intro to Loaded starts up]

INTRODUCING....

Nightshift’s monthly guide to the best local music bubbling under

**LOW ISLAND**

Who are they?

Oxford electro-pop/indie/r’n’b band Low Island are Jamie Jay (*vocals; keyboards; electronics*); Carlos Posada (*vocals; keys; electronics; guitar*); Jacob Lively (*bass*) and Felix Higginbottom (*drums*). Long time friends Carlos, Jacob and Jamie were in local favourites Wild Swim and Low Island grew out of a set of music Jamie and Carlos wrote and performed for a play called *Fast Track* at The North Wall Theatre: “we stumbled upon this electronic and ambient sound world that laid a lot of the groundwork for the band.” Gigs so far have been thin on the ground, split between Oxford and London but the band have released a clutch of singles. Debut ‘Anywhere’ was a *Nightshift* Demo of the Month. This month they release ‘Holding It Down’, picking up plays on Radio 1, 6Music and BBC Oxford Introducing. They play The Uncommon Stage at Common People on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> May.

What do they sound like?

Low Island create, woozy, haunting, atmospheric electro-pop, underpinning comforting, starlit washes of synths with a slightly disorientating lysergic feel. *Nightshift*’s review of debut single ‘Anywhere’ described it as “like a midnight train across icy tundra”; the band describe themselves as sounding like “late night drives on motorway.” There’s a definitely a late night vibe going on here.

What inspires them?

“Arthur Russell’s lyrics, drive to always push boundaries and ability to be experimental and accessible at the same time is a constant source of inspiration.”

Career highlight so far:

“Making the first two videos was a really intense and exhilarating experience for us, as we were heavily involved in the whole process, from conceptualising to running the shoots. We’re all really proud of how they both came out and had so much fun throughout. Also, hearing the lead single from our new EP ‘Holding It Down’ on Huw Stephens’ and Lauren Laverne’s shows was a mega vibe.”



And the lowlight:

“Setting a living room on fire for our video in a densely wooded area after being awake for 28 hours and realising we had only one fire extinguisher.”

Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

“It was Orange Vision: massive shame that they’ve split up.”

If they could only keep one album in the world, it would be:

“Fleet Foxes: ‘Helplessness Blues’”.

When is their next local gig and what can newcomers expect?

“We’re really excited to be playing The Uncommon Stage at Common People on the Sunday. We don’t really try to replicate our recordings onstage, so we often just go real hard instead.”

Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:

“Our favourite things are BBC Introducing in Oxford, *Nightshift*, Truck Store, and all of the other brilliant people who support local music here. Our least favourite thing is that there aren’t more shops like Truck Store and PMT where you can go to buy music and gear. They’re great places to learn about music and meet like-minded people.”

You might love them if you love:

Arthur Russell; Caribou; Grizzly Bear; Wild Beasts; Radiohead.

Hear them here:

[facebook.com/lowislandmusic](https://facebook.com/lowislandmusic) and Spotify.

**ALL OUR YESTERDAYS**

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

**20 YEARS AGO**

An epoch-making mark in Oxford – and global – music history this month with the release of **Radiohead**’s now classic ‘**Paranoid Android**’ single, a sprawling, seven-and-a-half-minute epic journey that raised the stakes for every band on the planet in one fell swoop and preceded third album ‘**OK Computer**’ the following month. Presented with an advance copy of the song on cassette (they’re back in fashion, apparently) in time for press deadline, *Nightshift* described it as “shifting all over the shop, from skulking acoustic mantra to wiry, wiggled-out entropy in the time it takes to flick on a light to see what the blazes is going on. The first time you hear it you think, ‘eh?’; the second time round you think maybe they’re testing how far they can push it; by the fifth play you’re captivated, it keeps dragging you back for more.” Rather more straightforward, if less memorable, was **Hurricane #1**’s debut single, ‘**Step Into My World**’, on Creation Records, **Andy Bell**’s post-**Ride** project latching onto the prevailing Britpop mood, but destined not to leave a mark like his previous band, now thankfully reformed. Hurricane #1 launched the single with a show at **The Zodiac** on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month, while the same night **The Bigger the God** launched their own ‘**When Martin Met Martine**’ up at **Brookes Students Union**. Elsewhere **The Nubiles**; **The Changelings**; **Tumbleweed**; **Beaker**; **Callous** and **Dustball** were flying the flag for local music. Bands in town included **Feeder** at **The Point** – the band back in town last month – **Kenickie** and **Carter USM**, both at The Zodiac.

**10 YEARS AGO**

It being May, it was **Punt** month and back in 2007 we found **Smilex** closing off the annual celebration of new local music in fine, feral style at **The Cellar**. Joining them on the night were **Mephisto Grande**; **Space Heroes of the People**; **Borderville**; **Mr Shadow**; **Brickwork Lizards**, and a bunch of young striplings going under the name **Stornoway**. We know what happened to them, but what of **Thirty Two**; **Mondo Cada**; **The Gullivers**; **Mile High Young Team** and **Ape Has Killed Ape** these days? If The Punt was the future, the past was being celebrated at **The Zodiac**, which bowed out with a spectacular, emotional blow-out featuring sets from reformed local heroes **The Candyskins**; **The Nubiles**; **Dustball** and **Unbelievable Truth**, as well as **Winnebago Deal**; **The Relationships** and **The Epstein**. The night was to go down in local music history and provided the impetus for Jon Spira’s **Anyone Can Play Guitar** film. A glance at the month’s gig guide revealed **The Waterboys**; **A Silver Mount Zion**; **Simian Mobile Disco** and **Biffy Clyro** as chief highlights, while over in the demo pages Kidlington’s one-man electro warrior **The Nichole Steal** topped the pile with his “morass of guitars that churn like an android’s stomach on a rough ferry crossing,” though **Phil Honey**, chief protagonist behind such *Nightshift* faves as The Rock of Travolta, Boywithatoy and The Delta Frequency was dumped for his solo acoustic demo, which was “a barely coherent somnambulant dirge.”

**5 YEARS AGO**

Five years on The Punt was still showcasing what was new and exciting in Oxford music. **Tamara Parsons-Baker** opened the show and **Manacles of Acid** closed it in a shower of mangled techno and confetti cannons and in between we saw **Undersmile**; **Jess Hall**; **The Long Insiders**; **Half Decent**; **Tiger Mendoza**; **Gunning For Tamar**; **Dallas Don’t**; **ToLiesel**; **Mutagenocide**; **Kill Murray** and the much missed **Cellar Family**, while **Leftouterjoin** managed to fill **The Wheatsheaf** with so much smoke the alarms went off and they had to open all the windows in the venue. Veterans of the local scene who’d made the Sheaf their second home for many years were shocked to discover the place actually had windows. We’ve not seen them since. In other news **Gappy Tooth Industries** celebrated its tenth anniversary, the monthly live music club renowned for its eclectic line-ups and policy of never booking the same act twice. **Peerless Pirates** headlined the anniversary party, joined by Leeds’ **Galaxies** and laptop popster **Gert Lassitude**. Good to see the club still going strong – almost the epitome of grassroots music championing. **Fixers** made their second appearance on *Nightshift*’s front cover, talking about debut album ‘We’ll Be The Moon’, the long overdue follow-up to which is recorded and ready to go at some point, while **Gaz Coombes** released his solo debut, ‘Presents: Here Comes the Bombs’; the man would be gracing next month’s issue, of which more next time...



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# DEMOS

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## DEMO OF THE MONTH

*Ah, joy. Spring has sprung and a newly liberated Britain is claiming back its Great. Spitfires are nesting in the hedges; a flotilla of maiden aunts is cycling past Nightshift Towers on their way to church; there's cricket and cream teas on every village green and anyone with a surname ending in 'i' or 'v' is being herded onto a P&O ferry at Dover. Time to celebrate by listening to some good old British demos! Let's hope they all sound like Elgar; eh readers.*

### JAMIE GILLETT

Oh sorry, did we mention Elgar was influenced heavily by Handel, Dvořák and Brahms? Damned foreign types coming over here spreading musical innovation. What we need is some good old fashioned stoner metal, forged in the foundries of Birmingham by Lord Tony of Iommi back when Britain built empires and warships rather than went shopping and ate pizza. Jamie Gillett used to be drummer in Caravan of Whores, one of Oxford's finest stoner bands; talented lad that he is, he also invented something called a neuroharp, which harnessed brainwaves to make music. We expect great things and by and large we get them here with his new solo demo, which strays some way beyond his metal roots and into far more experimental territory, while retaining a grimy sense of menace and an oppressive ambience. Opener here 'Well You Go Out There And Die, Then' typifies his fine sense of musical balance, the ambient synthetics and guitar reverie contrasting with a sample of Tony Benn's righteous opposition to the Iraq war in Parliament. Further in, on the splendidly titled 'The Conscious Radar Is A Troubleshooter', the elegance provided by the layered middle-distance fuzz goes up against a wilful lo-fi clumsiness in the acoustic guitar playing while sampled narrative delves into serious philosophical territory. It'd be lazy to class it as post-rock, though there's more of that genre's pure roots here than many of the countless Mogwai copyists in the world will ever have, and there's some post-metal influence at work in the almost symphonic build and build of discreet noise, but there are also elements of folktronica, psychedelia and contemporary classical music at play – particularly 'I Don't Know What To Do' with its echoes of Steve Reich's 'Music for 18 Musicians'. It's never cosy or easy but it's outward looking and subtly adventurous. See what happens when you open your

*Demo of the Month wins a free half day at Soundworks studio in Oxford, courtesy of Umair Chaudhry. Visit [www.umairchaudhry.co.uk/nightshift](http://www.umairchaudhry.co.uk/nightshift)*

borders and horizons? Interesting stuff happens, that's what.

### JUNK WHALE

Then again maybe you savour the taste of powdered egg, spam and condensed milk, because it reminds you of Britain's heroic defiance of Nazism, or because you're a bit weird. In which case here's the musical equivalent of that exotic feast. Junk Whale is the work of two members of Four Thousand Dollar Ham Napkin, who got a rather positive review in these pages a couple of months back, and we feel bad knocking a project set up with the intent of raising money for the Alzheimer's Society, but while there are moments when they come close to replicating their superfuzzed Dinosaur Jr/Smashing Pumpkins noise, they come interspersed with prosaic indie rock that sounds like it's done a two-minute trolley dash through the grunge supermarket and only later wondered how it was going to stick all the disparate body parts together to form a coherent song. For the most part the pair rarely get out of second gear with tracks like 'Flooded', which sounds like a Cotswold pub folk band having an epiphany after hearing Feeder on the jukebox and then failing miserably to replicate the energy of that band. 'Not My Problem', meanwhile sounds like they picked up too many detuned middle-eights and sensitive interludes on that trolley dash and now feel compelled to make an entire song out them while whining angrily about their poor decision making. Look, here's a suggestion: Junk Whale is a way better band name than Four Thousand Dollar Ham Napkin, while the Napkins, as we shall call them for the sake of brevity, have far better songs, so why not combine the good bits of each and pretend the rest of all this unpleasantness never happened.

### RESTRUCTURE

Talking of all things unpleasant, the rise and rise of nationalism in recent years has gone hand in hand with a resurgence in football violence with Russia's finest set to go toe to toe with England's top boys at the next World Cup in a dress rehearsal for the full-scale cyber/nuclear pitched battle to follow. Which is a rambling way of getting round to saying Restructure here claim to be inspired by 80s terrace culture, acid house and "anarchist mischief", which in musical terms seems to equate to sounding like Sleaford Mods if you replaced the genially contemptuous Jason Williamson with the more maniacal ranting of Don Logan from *Sexy Beast*, or maybe got Steve Ignorant from Crass to front a lo-fi version

of The Shamen. It's yobbish, cleverer than it lets on, often tuneless (except a synth bit that sounds like it's been nicked from the soundtrack to *Miami Vice*) and could have arrived in a crumpled heap from 1983 after a skinhead, a casual and a new romantic got into a brawl over ownership of a Roland TR- 808 in a Laundromat and fell into a tumble dryer that was actually a time machine. We think we were meant to review the studio versions of the demos they sent us but the live at Klub Kakofanny recording is more entertaining, bringing both the punk and hip hop side of the band to the fore. "We shouldn't take any more / We should be banging down Number 10's door" shouts Mark Webb over Fred Toon's thumping laptop beats; if nothing really has changed between Thatcher and May's leaderships, maybe we shouldn't expect music to have moved on too much either.

### FIREMAN CUTE & GANGSTER STUPID / DJFKNJKNKF / THE THE CLUCKING CLUCKING TROUT

If you thought untangling the UK's EU membership was a headache, try unscrambling this. The email comes from a bloke called Ross McIntosh, is signed "Fireman Cute and Gangster Stupid" while the Soundcloud is credited to djfknjknkf, when we email him back to ask which name we should use he says it's The The Clucking Clucking Trout Trout. And if that's confusing it's nothing compared to the music, which is a one-track demo called 'Jeremy Paxman State of Mind' that sounds like Coil or Nurse With Wound at their most dissonant, or maybe the incidental music from *Eraserhead* with a female Siri talking nonsensical non sequiturs, punctuated by some bloke rambling about PJ Harvey, going to hospital, and beetroot farmers (possibly) while other interjections involve someone declaring "I'm posher than Prince William, he's a c\*\*\*" and it concludes with the repeated soothing/sinister robot voice intoning "For many years now Jeremy Paxman has been concerned his television persona does not show the true breadth of his character" followed by a minute of test tone. It's a weird, doomladen industrial bad acid trip and it should be played at top volume to politicians across the world until they break down in tears and agree to stop wars, save the planet and give everyone a kitten to play with. For our part we're going to break into our local pharmacy tonight and see if we can steal enough pills to be able to dance to this.

*Send demos for review to: Nightshift, PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU, or email links to [editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk](mailto:editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk), clearly marked Demos. IMPORTANT: no review without a contact phone number. If you can't handle criticism, please don't send us your demo. We make no pretence to being fair, objective or open-minded and reserve the right to use juvenile insults while almost completely ignoring your music should we feel like it. Your Facebook friends are welcome to get all huffy on your behalf, but we'll laugh at them too.*

### DAISY

Not sure if this is a blessed relief or a crushing disappointment after that mentalism, but it is both soothing and melodic, two things djfknjknkf aren't. Daisy is the band formed by Luke Allmond of former Demo of the Month winners Vagueworld (who subsequently sent us a song with the line "fuck off *Nightshift*" in it, which endeared us to them immensely if only for having the guts to do it). Did we say soothing? It's all relative really since the first song here, 'Baby', is a creepy love song about cutting people's throats and licking wounds, a machine beat emo style stalker lullaby to self harm and (possibly) bloodstained snuggles in front of Netflix. But, yeah, it's soothing in that Luke's got a sweet serenity about his voice (like all the best psychopaths), particularly on the wispy, shimmering 'My Baby's Blood' (which again seem to involve an inordinate amount of viscera and possibly vampirism), up to the point all kinds of carnage breaks out and he's screaming his throat raw. Then we end on 'Baby Loves You', which is kind of Richard Walters gene spliced with Francis Dollarhyde. He does shoe-gazey seduction pretty well does Luke, but we're not going to fall for his charms. Not if we want to wake up tomorrow morning with all our internal organs intact.

## THE DEMO DUMPER

### DECOVO

Given all this musical lunacy, murder, self harm, anarchic jockbery and Paxman on acid, is it any wonder people crave the security of a safe, solid pop tune played on a guitar with no fancy pretensions. Well just for them here's Decovo, a band who've not had the warmest reception in these pages in the past and aren't going to have the welcome mat rolled out for them this time either, unless we're doing it just so we can then pull it out from under their feet and leave them sprawled on the floor like fat labradors on wet lino. Their Facebook profile claims they're "an alt rock band with various influences spanning prog, jazz, funk and metal," none of which seem to be in evidence on this latest set of recordings, which stretch from slightly angsty laborious soft rock to overwrought indie balladry and onward into, erm, more angsty laborious soft rock and overwrought indie balladry. If Restructure are ten pints of Stella and a kebab; djfknjknkf/Trout thing are a tab of acid and a bag of ghost chillies and Daisy are your dearly beloved baked in a pie, Decovo are a lukewarm can of Fosters and an early bedtime. Put them all to the popular vote and we know who'd win, just like the upcoming election. Maybe humanity isn't worth saving after all.

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 + Cherokii

Tue 25th Apr • £15 adv  
**Frankie Ballard**

Thu 27th Apr • £15 adv  
**While She Sleeps**  
 + In Hearts Wake

Thu 27th Apr • £9 adv  
**Ran Kan Kan and Sol Samba**

Fri 28th Apr • £10 adv • 11pm  
**Fabio & Grooverider**  
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Fri 28th Apr • £23.50 adv  
**Tinariwen**  
 + Art Theefe

Sat 29th Apr • £12 adv  
**Chasing Daylight**  
 + Earinade  
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 + Spinal Dad

Sat 29th Apr • £13 adv  
**Rat Boy**

Sun 30th Apr • **SOLD OUT** • 11pm  
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Thu 4th May • £28 adv • 6pm  
**Morgan Heritage & Etana**  
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Sat 6th May • £16 adv • 6.30pm  
**Ward Thomas**

Sat 6th May • £12 adv • 6pm  
**Bigfoot**  
 + Regulus  
 + New Generation Superstars  
 + Hell's Gazelles

Tue 9th May • £10 adv  
**The Japanese House**

Tue 9th May • £15 adv  
**J Hus**

Wed 10th May • £10 adv • 6pm  
**The Magic Gang**

Friday 12th May • £6 adv  
**End Of An Era**  
 + Dave and the Ravers  
 + Five Quarters of a Quartet  
 + We Only Play Theme Tunes  
 + Ivory  
 + Chloe Chesney

Sat 13th May • £7 adv • 6pm  
**Skeletor Ft.**  
 + Desert Storm  
 + Kontek  
 + The Reaper  
 + Shattered Compass  
 + A Nightmare Upon Us

Sat 13th May • £17 adv • 11pm  
**The Oxford Soul Train**

Tue 16th May • £13.50 adv  
**The Comet Is Coming**  
 + Flamingods  
 + Wandering Wires

Thu 18th May • £27.50 adv  
**The Mission**  
 + The Skeletal Family  
 + Pauline Murray

Thu 19th May • £8 adv  
**Uprising - BBC Introducing**  
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 + Lucy Leave  
 + Harry Pane  
 + Ghosts In The Photographs  
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Sat 20th May • £10 adv • 6.30pm  
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Sat 27th May • £11 adv • 6.30pm  
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Tue 30th May • £25 adv • 7.30pm  
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Fri 2nd June • £20 adv  
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Wed 7th June • £19.50 adv  
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Fri 9th Jun • £25 adv  
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Fri 9th Jun • £14 adv  
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Mon 25th Sep • £18 adv  
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**The Smyths: Strangeways Here We Come Tour**

Sat 7th Oct • £14 adv • 6.30pm  
**Amber Run**

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**Wille & The Bandits**  
 + Claude Hay

Fri 27th Oct • £12 adv • 6.30pm  
**Guns 2 Roses**

Fri 3rd Nov • £23 adv • 6.30pm  
**From The Jam "The Gift" 35th Anniversary**

Fri 10th Nov • £14 adv • 6pm  
**Pearl Jam UK (Pearl Jam Tribute)**

Fri 10th Nov • £22 adv • 6.30pm  
**Billy Bragg**

Fri 17th Nov • £12 adv • 6.30pm  
**Antarctic Monkeys**

Sat 18th Nov • £12 adv • 6.30pm  
**Definitely Mightbe**

Fri 24th Nov • £22.50 adv • 6.30pm  
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Fri 1st Dec • £14 adv • 6.30pm  
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